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CONTEMPORARY SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Book Reviews

Volume 24, Number 1 April 2002

ISEAS INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

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Volume 24, Number 1 April 2002

Articles

Ethno-Religious Conflicts: Rise or Decline? Recent Developments in Southeast Asia — Peter Searle — 1

Laskar Jihad and the Political Position of Conservative Islam in Indonesia — Michael Davis — 12

The Continuation of Civil Unrest and Poverty in Mindanao — Daniel Joseph Ringuet — 33

Security, Development and Political Participation in Thailand: Alternative Currencies of Legitimacy — Duncan McCargo — 50

Challenges for Japanese Diplomacy After the End of the Cold War — Fumitaka Furuoka — 68

Japan's Post-Cold War Security Policy: Bringing Back the Normal State — Bhubhindar Singh — 82

Vietnam-ASEAN Co-operation after the Cold War and the Continued Search for a Theoretical Framework — Nguyen Vu Tung — 106

The Lessons of Le Kha Phieu: Changing Rules in Vietnamese Politics — Zachary Abuza — 121

Reconciling Multiple Economic Multilateralisms: The Case of Singapore — Christopher M. Dent — 146

Book Reviews

Indonesia's Transformation and the Stability of Southeast Asia
By Angel Rabasa and Peter Chalk — *Daljit Singh* — 166

Malaysia: Mahathirism, Hegemony and the New Opposition
By John Hilley — *N. Ganesan* — 170

Self-Determination in East Timor: The United Nations, the Ballot, and International Intervention
By Ian Martin — *Paulo Gorjão* — 173

The Many Faces of Asian Security
Edited by Sheldon W. Simon — *...d Stubbs* — 176

Twenty-First Century World Order Asia-Pacific: Value Change, Exige... Power Realignment
Edited by James C. Hsiung — *...Sridharan* — 179

Soldiers of Fortune: The Rise and Fall of the Chinese Military-Business Complex, 1978-1998
By James Mulvenon — *Joseph Fewsmith* — 182

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A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL AND STRATEGIC AFFAIRS

Volume 24, Number 2 August 2002

Articles

Civilizing the Anarchical Society: Multilateral Security Processes in the Asia-Pacific	Ron Huisken	187
Whose Agenda? "Partnership" and International Assistance to Democratization and Governance Reform in Indonesia	Gordon Crawford and Yulius P. Hermawan	203
Towards a Human Rights Regime in Southeast Asia: Charting the Course of State Commitment	Maznah Mohamad	230
Dragon on Terrorism: Assessing China's Tactical Gains and Strategic Losses After 11 September	J. Mohan Malik	252
The Role of Philippine–American Relations in the Global Campaign Against Terrorism: Implications for Regional Security	Rommel C. Banlaoi	294
The Legacy and Lessons of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor	Paulo Gorjão	313
The Politics of Market Liberalization: A Comparative Study of the Korean and Philippine Telecommunications Service Industries	Dong-Yeob Kim	337
The National Reconciliation Process in Myanmar	Maung Aung Myoe	371
Malaysia–Singapore Relations: Retrospect and Prospect	K. S. Nathan	385

Book Reviews

Politics in Southeast Asia: Democracy or Less By William Case	*Michael J. Montesano*	411
Democracy in Malaysia: Discourses and Practices Edited by Francis Loh Kok Wah and Khoo Boo Teik	*Surain Subramaniam*	415
East Asia Imperilled: Transnational Challenges to Security By Alan Dupont	*Paul Smith*	418
India's Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent and Ready Arsenal By Ashley J. Tellis	*Rouben Azizian*	422

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CONTEMPORARY SOUTHEAST ASIA

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL AND STRATEGIC AFFAIRS

Volume 24, Number 3 December 2002

Articles

Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian Network	Zachary Abuza	427
Transition Pathways and Democratic Consolidation in Post-Marcos Philippines	Temario C. Rivera	466
Anti-Party Reaction in Indonesia: Causes and Implications	Paige Johnson Tan	484
Human Security in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia	Pierre P. Lizée	509
Partnership for Peace in Asia: ASEAN, the ARF, and the United Nations	Mely Caballero-Anthony	528
China's Expanding Maritime Ambitions in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean	Lee Jae-hyung	549
The Clash of Paradigms: International Administration and Local Political Legitimacy in East Timor	Tanja Hohe	569
Australia's Peacekeeping Role in the Post-Cold War Era	Derek McDougall	590

Book Reviews

Pacific Asia? Prospects for Security and Cooperation in East Asia By Mel Gurtov	*Chin Kin Wah*	609
The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia Edited by Robert W. Hefner	*Meredith L. Weiss*	612
Fear and Sanctuary: Burmese Refugees in Thailand By Hazel J. Lang	*Maitri Aung-Thwin*	617
Nuclear India in the Twenty-First Century Edited by D.R. Sardesai and Raju G.C. Thomas	*Arabinda Acharya*	621

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Contemporary Southeast Asia, Volume 24, Number 1, April 2002

Ethno-Religious Conflicts: Rise or Decline? Recent Developments in Southeast Asia

PETER SEARLE

The rise or decline of ethno-religious conflict in Southeast Asia will largely depend on the extent to which Indonesia, as the "pivotal state" in the region, is able to manage its own democratic transition. In the Indonesian case, the rise of ethno-religious conflict is inextricably linked to Indonesia's chronic ongoing national crisis — a crisis arising, in the main, from the weakness of the state and radical decentralization that is not working well. In Indonesia, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, ethno-religious conflict has also been spurred by the conjunction of economic and social marginalization with significant demographic change. External factors (particularly that of Islam as a potent mobilizing force both within and beyond state borders) have also exacerbated such conflict.

Introduction

In the 1960s, the renowned American anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, in his seminal work, "The Integrative Revolution" concluded: "The havoc wreaked both upon themselves and others by those modern (or semi-modern) states that did passionately seek to become primordial rather than civil political communities... have only strengthened the reluctance publicly to advance race, language, religion and the like as bases for the definition of a terminal community."[1] Yet, contrary to that conclusion, and forty years later, the Southeast Asian region contains a plethora of groups who profess a commitment to separatism, or the establishment of states on an ethno-religious basis. In accounting for the present rise or decline of ethno-religious conflict in Southeast Asia, this overview will focus on the following factors:

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- the character of the state and its role and capacity in ameliorating or exacerbating such conflict;[2]
- the role of local factors (ethnicity, religion, and the distribution of resources) in the durability of conflict; and
- the significance of the external dimension, particularly the challenge emanating from Islamic religious revivalism in the persistence of conflict.

Indonesia

In all its reports, the International Crisis Group (IGC)[3] has emphasized how the burgeoning separatist and ethno-religious conflicts in Indonesia are inextricably linked to Indonesia's chronic ongoing crisis — in essence, the weakness and incapacity of the state. It notes that Indonesia is: "A state crippled by economic crisis; radical decentralization that has shaken up government structures but is not working well; a military whose cohesion and discipline have declined and a bureaucracy and legal system riddled with massive corruption".[4]

A brief survey of the conflicts in Aceh, West Irian, Maluku, and Kalimantan will highlight the linkage between them and Indonesia's broader crisis and the prospects (or not) of their resolution.

Aceh

Since April 2001 when the Indonesian military began an operation to quell the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), about 1,000 people have been killed in Aceh.[5] In her first state of the nation address, President Megawati Sukarnoputri apologized for the decades of human rights abuses in Aceh and Irian Jaya but rejected outright the option of independence for either province. Instead, Jakarta is attempting to woo back the people of those provinces by offering special autonomy to both. In the case of Aceh, autonomy will mean that 70 per cent of oil and gas revenues will go to the Acehnese authorities for the next eight years, and the province, whose population is 97 per cent Muslim, will also have the right to base its legal system on *Shariah* or Islamic law. If autonomy reduces poverty and brings the Acehnese a greater sense of justice and identification with their province then support for independence may gradually diminish, but considerable obstacles remain in the way.

The first obstacle is that Indonesia's armed forces remain committed to destroying the armed wing of GAM. However, as the ICG has concluded, further conflict between the military and GAM will only result in a stalemate, and continued abuses by the security forces will

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further alienate ordinary Acehnese.[6] Secondly, although autonomy is the only alternative at present to prolonged conflict, there are serious divisions among the Acehnese on the merits of autonomy or independence. (A major stumbling bloc is the GAM, which controls about 80 per cent of Aceh's territory and insists on independence.) Thirdly, elements on both sides, in the military and GAM, have vested interests in prolonging the conflict. In that regard, the ICG notes that, "continued engagement in Aceh allows the military to portray itself as the only force capable of preventing the disintegration of Indonesia and thereby helps it to preserve its political influence".[7] Continued engagement also supports the army's push to regain responsibility for internal security from the police — "that in turn justifies the army's retention of the territorial system that is the fountain of non-government funding".[8] Elements on both sides, the military and GAM, also appear to have vested interests linked to the lucrative trade in marijuana.[9]

Finally, in addition to the above obstacles, autonomy will have to be implemented in the midst of conflict and against a long history of Jakarta's broken promises to Aceh. Yet, if the implementation of the central government's commitments under the autonomy law stall, many Acehnese will conclude that Jakarta is deceiving them again, and the most likely result would be a rise in support for independence.[10]

Irian Jaya

Turning to Irian Jaya, the mix of factors prompting conflict there also includes rancour over the distribution of resources. Like Aceh, Irian Jaya is resource-rich (minerals and oil), having one of the world's largest copper and gold mines at Freeport. Unlike Aceh, however, Papuan/Melanesian ethnic identity looms larger than religion. A separate Papuan identity and the Papuan feeling of marginalization have been exacerbated in recent years by the massive inflow of migrant settlers from elsewhere in the archipelago. The Indonesian migrant settlers dominate the economy of the province, and many Papuans believe that Jakarta's only interest in the province is the exploitation of its natural resources.[11]

Differences resonate in the cases of Aceh and Irian Jaya. Irian Jaya is half as populous as Aceh and its two million inhabitants are spread across a territory seven times larger than Aceh. Unlike the Acehnese, ethnic Papuans speak hundreds of distinct languages and the province's mountainous terrain further limits the ability of the sovereignty-seeking Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Movement or OPM) to mobilize a united front against Jakarta. Again, in contrast to Aceh, Jakarta has been able to reassert its authority in the province, although continuing counter-insurgency operations have left a legacy of military atrocities

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similar to those suffered by the Acehnese, which, in turn, have further stoked Papuan identity and demands for independence.

To stave off the growing clamour for independence, Jakarta has also offered special autonomy to Irian Jaya. In the case of Irian Jaya, autonomy will mean that 80 per cent of the revenue from natural resources, which include minerals, oil and gas, will remain in the province. It will also involve the province's name being changed to Papua, and it will be allowed to have its own flag and national anthem, "as long as they are not used as the symbol of sovereignty", but as symbols of Papuan cultural identity.[12]

Whether greater autonomy will resolve the conflict in Irian Jaya will depend on a number of factors. First, as the ICG has noted, "against a background of severe Papuan social and economic disadvantage, autonomy will only be the first phase of a long process of capacity and institution building".[13] Secondly, autonomy will require a complete change of Jakarta's "mindset" in that governance dependant on the use of force will have to cease and be replaced by an inclusive policy that ensures a greater role for all Papuans at all levels of government.[14] Finally, as in Aceh, history has made Papuans highly sceptical of Jakarta's intentions, so unless the government is robust in its implementation of the autonomy package (and weakness and confusion at the centre make that a doubtful proposition), the result could be a Papuan backlash and increased demands for independence.

Maluku and Kalimantan

During the past two years, inter-communal violence in Indonesia's Maluku islands has left more than 5,000 people dead, and displaced roughly 500,000 more. The origins and complexities of this conflict have been succinctly summed up by the ICG, which states:

> Though often described in terms of a Christian-Muslim fight, at the core of the Maluku violence lies economic and political competition between local interests. Wrapped around this core is a series of external problems ranging from the national agenda of a resurgent group of Muslim politicians to efforts by some segments of the military to undermine the [former] government of President Abdurrahman Wahid.[15]

So, again, key elements within the state not only failed to contain the conflict, but state/national linkages greatly exacerbated it. Particularly significant in that regard has been the unwillingness of the government and the military to remove the main source of the violence — the Laskar Jihad, a radical Muslim group that has received training and weapons from sympathizers in the military. It was the arrival of the Laskar Jihad in Maluku between April and June 2000 which transformed local inter-

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mittent fighting between two communities, into a campaign of religious cleansing that threatened to have a contagion effect beyond Maluku. (Laskar Jihad now has its Christian counterpart, Laskar Kristus — the Army of Christ).[16] While the government's paralysis is partly because the Laskar Jihad has sympathetic elements in the military, it is also because the government wishes to avoid the political cost of opposing a pro-Muslim force.[17] Further, in that vein, the ICG noted that, "it is widely believed that certain national politicians and military officers who had been displaced by the Wahid government encouraged violence in Maluku and elsewhere as a means to discredit and destabilise (that) government".[18] More recently, former palace officials have said that Wahid ignored the newly formed Laskar Jihad's disastrous intervention in Maluku in mid-2000 in exchange for promises from hardline Muslim leaders that they, at least, would leave the embattled leader alone.[19]

The combination of factors at the core of the violence in Maluku was also present, albeit with a somewhat different mix, in Central Kalimantan where conflict between indigenous Dayaks and immigrant Madurese exploded in mid-February 2001. What started as isolated killings by both sides quickly developed into a one-sided massacre of about 500 Madurese by Dayaks. As in Maluku and Irian Jaya, the violence was partly driven by demographic change and the increasing marginalization of the Dayaks, socially and economically, by more commercially aggressive immigrant groups. However, why the Madurese community, which was small compared to other immigrant groups, especially the Javanese and Banjarese, became the sole target of Dayak hostility is not entirely clear. The "cultural" and "economic" explanations that have been advanced include the stereotyping of Madurese by Dayaks as "arrogant, exclusive and violent".[20] On the economic side, the competition between the two groups for jobs at lower rungs of the economy has been particularly fierce.[21] Competition over land, as the Madurese have ventured into the hinterland, directed there in the past as part of the Soeharto regime's transmigration programme, has also been cited as a factor in Dayak-Madurese tensions.[22] Overlaying these tensions was political competition between local interests as Indonesia's autonomy programme, which passes much of Jakarta's former power over finance and administration to the regencies,[23] also encouraged resentments and jealousies as it disenfranchized some local bureaucrats. (Soon after the killings began in Kalimantan, police arrested three men for paying 20 million rupiah [US$2,129] to incite violence between the Dayaks and the Madurese).[24]

Nevertheless, whatever the precise mix of local factors driving the conflict in Central Kalimantan, again it was the incapacity of the security forces to anticipate or take early action to prevent its spread, that

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greatly worsened the situation. Indeed, in the midst of the communal slaughter, the army and the police renewed their internecine rivalry and were engaged in a six-hour armed standoff.[25] As one observer wryly noted, "so much for help from Jakarta!"[26]

"The Chinese Problem"

In the past two years, the gravity of the ethno-religious conflicts that have erupted in Kalimantan and elsewhere have tended to overshadow a more perennial source of ethnic conflict in Indonesia: that between the indigenous *pribumi* and the Chinese. An ethnic minority, the Chinese who constitute only about 3 per cent of the population, hold a grossly disproportionate share of Indonesia's corporate wealth, often said to be around 70 per cent. Resentment at the disparity and of the Chinese financial backers/cronies associated with the former Soeharto regime erupted with the downfall of that regime in May 1998. The May 1998 riots were characterized by the systematic brutal rapes of many Chinese women and young girls, and the widespread looting and burning of Chinese properties. It has been argued that this experience convinced many Chinese that there was no safety or future for them in Indonesia unless radical and rapid changes in official policies and public attitudes towards them took place soon.[27] About 40,000 Chinese (together with vast but incalculable sums of money) are said to have left Indonesia since May 1998.[28]

While in 2000, the Chinese were allowed to openly celebrate Chinese New Year for the first time in years, little other substantive progress or change has occurred in official policies or public attitudes such as to convince the Chinese that they have a secure future in Indonesia. Yet, as Jamie Mackie has pointed out, "the prospects of achieving economic recovery in Indonesia in the near future without the active participation of the Chinese are bleak ... and unless the Chinese can be lured back Indonesia will almost certainly remain mired in stagnation and poverty for many years".[29] So, Indonesia's economic crisis also has a sharp and complex ethnic dimension, which makes any early resolution of that crisis all the more problematic.

Besides the "Chinese problem", the examples of Aceh, Irian Jaya, Maluku and Kalimantan also highlight the high degree to which those conflicts are intimately and inextricably linked to Indonesia's chronic ongoing crisis. As the prospects for an early end to that crisis appear dim, so do they seem so for conflict and crises elsewhere in Indonesia. In accounting for the rise or decline of ethno-religious conflict in South-east Asia (notably, in the Philippines, Thailand, and Myanmar/Burma) one finds a more even "mix of the three key variables identified earlier in these countries, compared with Indonesia — that is, between the

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character of the state, the role of local factors, and the significance of the external dimension (although, of course, the mix is different in each case) in the exacerbation or containment of conflict.

The Philippines: The Moro Rebellion

The Moro rebellion in the southern Philippines acquired a new vigour in the 1990s. The economic grievances of the Moro minority (among the poorest and least educated in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation), have been reinforced by a growing sense of Islamic identity associated with the worldwide resurgence of Islam. This development has led to more extreme groups vying for leadership of the Moros, particularly after a Peace Agreement signed between the more moderate and secular Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the government in 1996 appeared to shortchange the MNLF. This was particularly where hopes for autonomy and greater economic benefits were concerned.

Now, more prominent in representing Moro grievances, is a breakaway group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which emphasizes its Islamic identity, and the extremist Abu Sayyaf group (which has links to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network). In July 2001 it was reported that a ceasefire between the MILF and the government had been signed in Tripoli, Libya, as a prelude to peace talks later in the year.[30] The challenge of any fresh peace deal, however, will be to attract investment and development, and therefore jobs and opportunities, to an area still wreaked by violence. Unless, in the wake of a shaky ceasefire and peace deal, the government can deliver promised socio-economic benefits and some degree of autonomy (and its past record and obstacles to both are considerable),[31] the prospects for a durable peace may remain elusive.[32] (Another major impediment to autonomy is the growth of a non-Muslim majority in most of the fifteen provinces in the south.)[33]

Thailand

The external pressures on the Thai Government to reach some sort of settlement with the Malay separatist movement in its four Muslim-dominated southern provinces, have been less than the pressures the overseas Muslim community have exerted on successive Philippine governments.[34] Nevertheless, in recent years the Thai Government has made a number of significant concessions to the Malay separatists. These include a greater tolerance of religious pluralism, improved education and socio-economic development packages in the south, and

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the increased recruitment of Muslims into the state administrative structure. While the Thai Government has shown no inclination to explore autonomy as a solution to the problem of ethnic separatism, the concessions made to the Malay population have, to date, been instrumental in keeping the situation well under control.[35]

This overall optimistic assessment should be tempered somewhat, however, following a recent increase in insurgent activity and growing evidence of closer ties being forged between various guerilla groups in southern Thailand with co-religionists in the region and beyond. Some of the more significant regional links include those between the Thai Pattani United Liberation Organization, or PULO, with those of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM).[36]

Myanmar/Burma

During the last decade, a number of developments have given the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), the military regime ruling Myanmar/Burma, unprecedented successes against ethnic insurgents. These have included the modernization of the armed forces, internal divisions among the largest of the ethnic rebel groups (notably, between the Buddhist and Christian Karens in the Karen National Union, or KNU), and a lack of external, especially material, support for the insurgents.[37] (It was particularly the ill-fated association between the KNU and Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy [NLD] that galvanized the central government's resolve to embark on a large-scale military modernization programme — a prime objective of which was to finally crush the rebels. The coincidence of that development, with debilitating divisions within the KNU, proved disastrous for the Karen. By 1997, the armed forces had broken the back of the Karen insurgency, a development that enabled the government to broker ceasefire agreements with seventeen other ethnic groups.[38]

However, if the ceasefire agreements that the regime has reached with the various ethnic groups are to be durable, it must address (which it has so far failed to do) the fundamental constitutional, political, and economic questions of concern to the minorities.[39] Overall, however, the case of Myanmar demonstrates that it is possible, for a time at least, to contain ethno-religious conflict without addressing or resolving its root causes.

Conclusion

From this survey of recent developments in Southeast Asia, a number of key factors emerge that exacerbate or ameliorate ethno-religious conflict in the region. First, at least in the case of Indonesia (and

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notwithstanding the particular roots of conflict in Aceh, West Irian, Maluku, and elsewhere) is the high degree to which those conflicts are linked to, and exacerbated by, Indonesia's chronic ongoing national crisis. Secondly, ethno-religious conflict has also been spurred in parts of Southeast Asia in recent years by the conjunction of economic and social grievance/marginalization with significant demographic change. Such change (particularly in Maluku, West Irian, Kalimantan, and the southern Philippines) poses even greater obstacles to either shorter or longer-term proposals of segregation, or autonomy, as a means of containing or ameliorating conflict. Thirdly, this survey has identified how the presence or absence of external factors can promote or contain ethno-religious conflict. Particularly pertinent in that regard is the challenge emanating from Islamic religious revivalism, and of Islam as a potent mobilizing symbol, both within and beyond state borders, where the activities of such groups as Abu Sayyaf, GAM, PULO, and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda are concerned. Finally, and stepping back somewhat, the rise or decline of ethno-religious conflict in Southeast Asia will critically depend on the extent to which Indonesia (as the "pivotal state" in the region)[40] is able to manage successfully (or not) its own democratic transition.

NOTES

1. See Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution", in *Old Societies and New States*, edited by Clifford Geertz (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), p. 110.
2. See David Brown, "From Peripheral Communities to Ethnic Nations: Separatism in Southeast Asia", *Pacific Affairs* 61, no. 1 (Spring 1988). In that article, Brown (p. 77) concludes, "since ethnic separatist movements purport to be rebellions against the state, it should come as no surprise to find the explanation for such separatism is indeed to be found in the character of the state".
3. The International Crisis Group (ICG) is a private, multinational organization committed to strengthening the capacity of the international community to anticipate, understand, and act to prevent and contain conflict. The ICG's approach is grounded in field research, and much of the material for this article, in particular where Indonesia is concerned, is drawn from the reports that have emanated from its Jakarta office.
4. ICG, "Indonesia, The Megawati Presidency", 2 October 2001.
5. *Age*, 14 July 2001.
6. ICG, "Indonesia, Aceh: Can Autonomy Stem the Conflict?", 27 June 2001.
7. ICG, "Indonesia, Aceh: Why Military Force Won't Bring Lasting Peace", 12 June 2001.
8. Ibid.
9. Aceh is said to be the second biggest producer of marijuana in Southeast Asia, almost all of it entirely for export. See Ron May, "Ethnic Separatism in Southeast Asia", *Pacific Viewpoint* 31, no. 2 (1990): 39; and ICG, "Indonesia, Aceh: Can Autonomy Stem the Conflict?", 7 December 2000, p. 2.
10. See ICG, "Indonesia, Ending Repression in Irian Jaya", 27 June 2001.

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11. See ICG, "Ending Repression in Irian Jaya", 20 September 2001.
12. See Christine Tjandraningsih, "Special Autonomy Bill on Papua submitted to Parliament", *Pacific Islands Report*, 1 October 2001; and *Jakarta Post*, 30 September 2001.
13. ICG, "Ending Repression in Irian Jaya", 20 September 2001.
14. Pertinent in this regard was the murder of Theys Eluay, prominent Papuan independence leader, probably by army special forces (Kopassus) in early November 2001. See *Australian Financial Review*, 2 January 2002.
15. ICG, "Indonesia, Overcoming Murder and Chaos in Maluku", 19 December 2000. For more details regarding the local economic and political dimensions of the conflict, see ICG Briefing, "Indonesia's Maluku Crisis", 19 July 2000, pp. 4–5.
16. See *The Economist*, "Holy war in the Spice Islands", 17 March 2001.
17. ICG, "Indonesia, Overcoming Murder and Chaos in Maluku", 19 December 2000.
18. Ibid.
19. John McBeth, "The Danger Within", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 September 2001.
20. ICG, "Communal Violence in Indonesia: Lessons from Kalimantan", 27 June 2001.
21. Simon Elegant, "The Darkest Season", *TIME*, 8 March 2001.
22. Michael Maher, "Uncivil Unrest", *Bulletin*, 13 March 2001.
23. Regencies would equate with counties or municipalities in other countries.
24. Two of the men appointed by Jakarta were civil servants who had lost their jobs as part of the autonomy scheme. See Simon Elegant, "The Darkest Season", *TIME*, 8 March 2001. For a succinct account on why efforts to devolve power to Indonesia's regions may cause more problems (at least in the short term) than they solve, see "Talking about a Devolution", *The Economist*, 6 January 2001.
25. There is a rivalry between the police and the army, a divide deepened when the two were formally split in 2001. See *TIME*, 8 March 2001.
26. *TIME*, 8 March 2001.
27. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 July 1998.
28. Jamie Mackie, "Tackling the Chinese Problem", in *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos?* edited by Geoff Forrester (Bathurst: Crawford House Publishing, 1999), p. 189.
29. Ibid.
30. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 and 20 September 2001.
31. For further details in this regard, see R.J. May, "Muslim Mindanao: Four Years After the Peace Agreement", in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2001* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001).
32. See Deidre Sheehan, "Swords into Ploughshares", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 September 2001.
33. See May, op. cit., p. 263.
34. Ron May makes this point in "Ethnic Separatism in Southeast Asia", in *Pacific Viewpoint* 31, no. 2 (1990):53.
35. Andrew Tan, *Armed Rebellion in the ASEAN States* (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 2000), p. 51. Tan's book provides a good, succinct and up-to-date review of ethno-religious and ideological rebellion in Southeast Asia.
36. See John McBeth, "The Danger Within", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 September 2001; and Greg Sheridan, "Tackling Regional Threat", *Weekend Australian*, 6–7 October 2001.
37. See Tan, op. cit., p. 74; and IGC Report, "Burma/Myanmar: How Strong is the Military Regime?", 21 December 2000.
38. Ibid.

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39. It must also put a stop to the human rights violations against those groups by its troops who have engaged in summary executions, rape, forced labour and the wholesale destruction of villages (See Tan, op. cit., p. 77).
40. The Yale historian of international strategy, Paul Kennedy, in a recent book, placed Indonesia squarely at the centre of the argument in the book. He was trying to focus on countries in the world that do not directly hurt or harm U.S. interests but are pivotal to and have the potential to destabilize the region around them. See Robert Chase, Emily Hill and Paul Kennedy, eds., *Pivotal States: A New Framework for U.S. Policy in the Developing World* (New York: WW Norton, 1999).

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Laskar Jihad and the Political Position of Conservative Islam in Indonesia

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Laskar Jihad introduced itself to the world in April 2000, when a procession of its members marched to the presidential palace in Jakarta brandishing sabres. By the following month, two to three thousand of the group's members had travelled to Maluku (the Moluccas), in eastern Indonesia, to fight alongside local Muslims locked in a cycle of communal violence with the region's Christian population. Their intervention turned the tables in a conflict in which the Christians had previously appeared to have the upper hand. Despite widespread criticism of their response to its activities, the Indonesian authorities have so far taken little sustained action against Laskar Jihad. The group's emergence has aroused speculation on whether it heralds an expansion of the political influence of conservative Islam among the world's largest Muslim population.

Introduction

The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States have focused unprecedented attention on militant Muslim groups across the world and prompted strategists and commentators alike to scour the globe for possible targets in the Bush Administration's "war against terrorism". In the case of Indonesia, considerable coverage has been devoted to the militant conservative Muslim group, Laskar Jihad, and allegations of links between this organization and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.

Laskar Jihad is a Java-based paramilitary group which, since April 2000, has intervened on behalf of local Muslims in the vicious fighting between Christians and Muslims in Maluku, which is estimated to have

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claimed more than 9,000 lives.[1] Laskar Jihad leaders have repeatedly expressed their intent to eradicate Christians from Ambon island (Maluku's political and economic hub) and have used murder and terror in their efforts to achieve these ends.[2] In November 2001, the group carried out its oft-stated threat to enter a conflict between Christians and Muslim populations in the region of Poso, Sulawesi, provoking a rapid escalation in the level of violence.

In an interview with the *New York Times* on 7 January 2002, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defence, Paul Wolfowitz, drew attention to the dangers of ungoverned regions within certain countries which had become "havens for terrorists". Wolfowitz chose to illustrate his point with reference to Maluku and central Sulawesi, two areas ravaged by communal violence where "outside Muslims, not outside Indonesia, have come in and exacerbated that situation" — a clear reference to the armed interventions of Laskar Jihad. This article examines what can be ascertained about the political position of conservative Islam in Indonesia from the emergence and activities of the Laskar Jihad. As President George Bush and bin Laden, in different ways, project a polarizing vision of a world unequivocally divided into friendly and hostile forces, how should we view Indonesia? Do groups such as Laskar Jihad have the capacity to make a difference to whose side, or which list, or axis Indonesia finds itself on?

Subsequent to a brief examination of the context in which Laskar Jihad emerged, the article focuses on the activities of the group in Maluku in eastern Indonesia since April 2000. Laskar Jihad's intervention in this region provided the justification for its creation, and has been its primary zone of operation. As such, it provides useful indicators as to the possible impact on central Sulawesi, and Indonesia as a whole, of the Laskar Jihad's recent intervention in Poso. It also offers substantial evidence for the central contention of this article: that what Laskar Jihad reveals about conservative Islam in Indonesia is the fundamental weaknesses in its political position and its lack of support among the largest Muslim population in the world.

Laskar Jihad: The Context

Laskar Jihad was established in the early months of 2000 at a time when political gains made by conservative modernist Muslim groups during the final years of Soeharto's New Order were in danger of being overturned. Conservative modernist organizations, such as DDII (Indonesian Council for Islamic Predication) and its offshoot KISDI (Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Islamic World), which spent the first two decades of the New Order set in lonely and

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dangerous opposition to the regime's pro-Western, secular outlook, had been co-opted by Soeharto as he sought to establish new sources of support outside the senior ranks of the armed forces from the late 1980s onwards.[3] This co-optation saw the Muslim hardliners attacking Soeharto's opponents in return for state patronage and new freedom to carry out their activities, which included undermining more moderate Muslim rivals.[4] It broadly coincided with Soeharto's elevation of a so-called "Green" (the colour symbolizing Islam) tendency within the TNI (the Indonesian armed forces) — officers distinguished less by personal piety than by willingness to use Islam as a political tool.[5] The convergence of the "Green" TNI and hardline Muslim organizations behind Soeharto forged alliances between these two groupings which were subsequently critical to the launching of Laskar Jihad.

The rising fortunes of conservative modernist Muslims were dealt a double blow, firstly by the fall of their patron, Soeharto, in May 1998, and secondly by the democratic elections in June 1999. None of the newly formed Islamist parties performed well at the polls, with the largest, the PBB (Crescent and Star Party), capturing just 2 per cent of the vote. The elections, instead, produced an emphatic endorsement of pluralist parties diametrically opposed to the exclusivist agenda of the conservative Muslims, with the largest share of the vote (37.4 per cent) going to the secular nationalist PDI-P of Megawati Sukarnoputri, and a significant share (17.4 per cent) taken by the PKB led by Abdurrahman Wahid.

This provided the context for the creation of Laskar Jihad. In one sense, conservative Muslims' worst fears were being realized as the prospect of a democratic system directly threatened groups with minimal electoral support. On the other hand, the uncertain political climate continued to offer considerable scope for frustrating a complete transition to democracy. The opportunities here derived from the weakness of state institutions, the shattered condition of the Indonesian economy, and the livelihoods of the majority of the population; while conversely, much of the New Order fabric, notably the networks of militant Muslim groups' "Green" military allies, remained largely intact. At the same time, conservative modernist Muslim groups found their public campaigns facilitated by greater freedom of expression. Another factor from which conservatives could derive some comfort was the overall political disorientation of the modernist *ummat* (community of Muslims).[6] The election results placed particular pressure on the putative leader of Indonesian modernist Muslims, Amien Rais, who had adopted a pluralist political platform for his newly created PAN party, which spectacularly failed to deliver.

Following voters' rejection of religious exclusivism, conservative groups were left searching for opportunities to discredit pluralism and

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assert their interpretation of Islam. Their tack was to adopt causes with the potential to unite and mobilize the *ummat* against opposing forces; that by exploiting points of friction between Muslims and non-Muslims, they might persuade Indonesian Muslims to discard their electoral allegiances to rally in defence of their faith.

Since fighting erupted in Ambon in January 1999, conservative hardliners had attempted to channel Indonesian Muslims' outrage at the government's failure to protect Maluku's Muslims into action against their Christian Moluccan antagonists. Their campaign acquired new impetus following the massacre by Christian militia of at least 500 Muslims in Halmahera, North Maluku, in December 1999, and culminated in a rally in Jakarta on 7 January 2000, which attracted tens of thousands.[7] This rally was addressed not only by conservative Muslim activists and members of Islamist parties such as the PBB but also by the "cornered" Amien Rais and PPP (United Development Party) leader and current Indonesian Vice-President, Hamzah Haz, who endorsed calls for a *jihad* (holy war) in Maluku.[8]

The rally's conservative Muslim organizers moved rapidly to harness the momentum it had generated. Activists including Ahmad Sumargono of KISDI and the PBB and Eggy Sudjana of HMI-MPO (a faction of the Indonesian Muslim Students Association, HMI), channelled their energies via a hitherto obscure group called the FKAWJ (Sunni Communication Forum) set up one year earlier. The FKAWJ, which pursues an exclusivist brand of Islam and seeks to impose Islamic *Shariah* law in Indonesia, is led by a preacher named Ja'far Umar Thalib, a former member of the anti-Soviet Mujahidin in Afghanistan. The group formally established on 30 January Laskar Jihad, a force for the defence of Moluccan Muslims against *kafir harbi* (belligerent infidels). In the weeks that followed, an initial trickle of Muslim fighters made their way to Maluku. However, the Laskar Jihad's mobilization began in earnest in April when it established a military training camp near Bogor in West Java.[9] The following month, two or three thousand Laskar Jihad fighters travelled unhindered to Maluku despite government pledges to prevent them from leaving Java. In the weeks that followed, allegations began to surface that Laskar Jihad was engaging in military offensives against Christian communities in the Moluccas.

Jihad in Maluku

More than three years after it began, there is as yet no authoritative explanation for the causes of the conflict in Maluku. A range of theories variously place emphasis on rivalries between Moluccan Christian and Muslim communities dating from the colonial era, and recent shifts in

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the balance of power between them; the destabilizing impact of the reintroduction of electoral politics as the means of contest between local élites; and outside interference by political élites in Jakarta and factions of the TNI. While there are abundant indications of external interference, there is compelling evidence pointing to underlying causes centred in political struggles at a local level.[10]

The intractability of the conflict relates not only to the same factors which caused it, but also to the changes and new agendas which the fighting has wrought in the leadership hierarchies of each community. The conflict has permitted previously peripheral, even disreputable, figures on each side to attain new positions of power, the preservation of which is contingent on the conflict's perpetuation.

In assessing the decision to undertake *jihad* in Maluku, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the anger expressed by conservative modernists and Indonesian Muslims generally at the plight of Moluccan Muslims was sincerely felt. Indonesian Muslims inside and outside Maluku perceived the conflict to have been instigated by the Christians, and believed that Christian fighters were the recipients of assistance, in the form of money and weapons, from Christian Moluccans in the Netherlands, as well as political and military figures in Indonesia.[11] Outrage was almost certainly fuelled by the long-standing sense among Muslims that the Christian minority in Indonesia, through the New Order period, in particular, had built up levels of political and economic influence vastly out of proportion to its numbers.[12] The issue of high-level Christian influence had long been a primary focus for the campaigns of conservative Muslim groups such as DDII.

In other respects, however, the creation of Laskar Jihad was based on calculation and opportunism, reflecting the political priorities of conservative Muslim groups following the 1999 elections. The Maluku violence presented an opportunity because it was so readily represented and perceived as a religious war. Whatever its full complexities, both sides in the conflict have contributed to the impression that it is based primarily on religion. Moluccan Christians have portrayed it as part of a wider campaign by militant Muslims to Islamicize Indonesia.[13] Muslims, meanwhile, have attempted to cast the violence as part of an international Christian conspiracy against Islam and Indonesian Muslims in particular.[14] In mobilizing against a Christian enemy, Laskar Jihad attempted to elevate the meaning of the communal violence in Maluku for the Indonesian *ummat*; to polarize Indonesians along religious lines and in the process position itself as a standard bearer for Islam.

Through mobilization of Indonesian Muslims, Laskar Jihad could hope to capture for conservative Muslims a political platform outside

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the nascent democratic system, which threatened to undercut their influence and to exercise leverage over Indonesia's political transition. That a stalling or destabilizing role was one of Laskar Jihad's objectives was implicit in Ja'far Umar Thalib's earliest public pronouncements, in which he demanded President Wahid's resignation.[15] Another political function of *jihad* against Moluccan Christians was the targeting of a community which had voted overwhelmingly in the elections for the secular-oriented PDI-P of Megawati.

An important facet of the decision to launch *jihad* was that in intervening in Maluku, Laskar Jihad could claim the additional justification of combating the presumed RMS (Republic of South Moluccas) secessionist movement.[16] That opposition to separatism is strictly a secondary motivation has been admitted by the group's members, who state, in reference to Aceh, that they will not intervene in separatist conflicts unless these can be tied to issues of religion.[17] In the case of Maluku, Laskar Jihad links *jihad* with separatism via the argument that East Timor's independence is the first stage in a conspiracy by Christians in Indonesia and internationally, to amputate regions in which Christianity predominates in order to weaken (Muslim) Indonesia.[18]

In one sense, the anti-separatism rhetoric conveniently underpins the *jihad*. Viewed from another angle, however, it implicitly recognizes that many Indonesian Muslims have more sympathy with the unitarian nationalist policies identified with Megawati than with the conservative modernist world-view. The anti-separatism plank in the Laskar Jihad manifesto acknowledges that *jihad*, in the sense of a struggle based on faith, may not be enough to stir most Indonesian Muslims and it must be seen as an essentially defensive device. It is significant that Laskar Jihad has articulated this objective most vigorously when under pressure. In the weeks following his arrest on 4 May 2000, Ja'far Umar Thalib took great pains to emphasize Laskar Jihad's anti-separatist credentials, going so far as to state publicly that the conflict in Maluku and Laskar Jihad's involvement were brought about not by religion but by separatism alone.[19]

There are further aspects to the choice of Maluku as a venue for intervention, which underline the weaknesses of the Laskar Jihad position from the outset. Features of the conflict, visible even in early 2000, suggested that involvement in Maluku did not offer an effective means of stalling democratic reform and undermining Indonesia's pluralist political leaders. Moreover, the localized nature and scope of the violence had not encouraged the sense of involvement among Muslims elsewhere in Indonesia, which might dispose them to answer the call for *jihad*. By the time Laskar Jihad set off from Java, the extent of the fighting was in fact already contracting, following successful reconciliation

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initiatives in southeastern Maluku. The potential for broadening the conflict to engulf other areas of Indonesia thus appeared limited.

A key feature of the Maluku conflict, both before and after the creation of Laskar Jihad, has been the reluctance of Indonesian Governments to expend political capital on attempts to resolve it. The contribution of the Wahid administration, for example, was largely confined to fleeting visits to Maluku by the President and his deputy, Megawati, who was personally charged with bringing about an end to the fighting. Despite her claims to have been working energetically behind the scenes, Megawati devoted little attention to Maluku; opting to go on holiday in Hong Kong over the millennium, as the fighting in the region flared once more.

This neglect to some extent reflects the weakness of the post-Soeharto governments and the magnitude of the challenges they have faced. It also indicates, however, their hard-headed assessment of Maluku as being of low political significance at the national level. Both the characteristics of the region itself — far from Indonesia's political centre-stage and home to less than one per cent of its population — and the local character of its conflict mean that Indonesia's leaders feel that they can ignore it at relatively low political cost. Unlike Aceh, the fighting in Maluku does not pose a serious threat to Indonesia's territorial integrity. Its lack of political weight, even subsequent to the involvement of Laskar Jihad, was revealed by the fact that Wahid's opponents, rather than heeding the demand of Ja'far Umar Thalib to impeach the President for his failure over Maluku, considered two tenuous allegations of corruption more compelling grounds for his removal in August 2000.

Meanwhile, Megawati's disregard of her responsibility for resolving the Maluku conflict has proved to have few political repercussions. Her early disinterest earned her a mild rebuke from PDI-P delegates but constituted no obstacle to her assumption of the Indonesian presidency. Particularly telling is the fact that the PPP and other modernist Muslim parties, whose primary concern is the advancement of the position of Muslims in Indonesia, regarded the Maluku conflict as so peripheral that they saw no political embarrassment in forming a governing coalition with the politician who had most conspicuously neglected this issue.

Recognition by Laskar Jihad that intervention in Maluku was not the optimum means of advancing its agenda at a national level was implicit in its threats to launch a *jihad* in Java if the government prevented it from travelling to Maluku. This amounted to tacit admission that action in Java would have a far greater impact politically. Going to Maluku represented a second-best option, but the

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limitations of the Laskar Jihad position meant that it was unable to undertake a comparable initiative in a more politically significant region. The choice of Maluku was furthermore informed by Laskar Jihad's realization that it could only hope to establish itself in an area in which government control had chronically broken down.

It is likely that the beleaguered Wahid government was relatively content to see Laskar Jihad confined to a remote, politically unimportant region of the country. The lacklustre efforts to prevent the group from travelling to Maluku in May 2000 might, as has been suggested, have derived from collusion between conservative Muslim groups and the police.[20] An alternative explanation, however, is that the government, for all its protestations, may have sanctioned the police inaction in the interests of getting Laskar Jihad out of Java. By investing their political and financial resources in the intervention in Maluku, the hardline Muslim groups behind Laskar Jihad must have known that they risked confining themselves to the political margins.

Sources of Support

Laskar Jihad unquestionably has access to substantial funds. It claims to have offices in all major towns in Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan, while in Maluku it owns a hospital, a radio station and about ten speedboats, as well as a sizeable military arsenal.[21] Spokesmen for Laskar Jihad claim that most of its funds are contributed by sympathetic members of the Indonesian public.[22] Laskar Jihad's leader, Ja'far Umar Thalib, however, has stated that the majority of its financing comes from overseas, in particular New Jersey (USA), Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and Singapore.[23]

Since the start of the Maluku conflict, allegations have repeatedly surfaced that the Soeharto family and their allies are funding groups such as Laskar Jihad, a suggestion denied vigorously by Ja'far.[24] The presumed motive of Soeharto and his associates was to destabilize post-New Order governments which might be inclined to investigate their alleged crimes and confiscate their personal fortunes. Whatever the veracity of these particular claims, the fact that much, if not most, of Laskar Jihad's budget is covered by overseas benefactors, is enough to inform us that the organization's affluence should not be interpreted as a reflection of support from Indonesia's Muslims.

Members of the Indonesian security forces have taken sides in the fighting in Maluku since the early stages of the conflict and there is credible evidence of collusion between Laskar Jihad and sections of both the military and the police.[25] Assistance has been provided by the military from an early stage. Indeed, Laskar Jihad members admit

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readily to receiving training from TNI officers.[26] In Maluku, TNI troops have even been filmed fighting alongside Laskar Jihad paramilitaries. Ja'far Umar Thalib boasts of co-operation at the highest level, and has claimed to have a hotline to the Indonesian Armed Forces Commander.[27] Laskar Jihad spokesmen contend that their fighters are equipped only with home-made weapons, guns salvaged from World War II wrecks and weapons dumps, and firearms captured from Christian combatants.[28] Eyewitness reports, however, suggest that the group is, in fact, equipped with military-issue weaponry.[29]

These military connections show that Laskar Jihad has been able to build on alliances forged between conservative Muslims and TNI factions during the last years of the New Order period and exploit areas of common interest. Like Laskar Jihad, sections of the military wished to destabilize the Wahid government, with a view to preventing reform of the TNI and the prosecution of officers for crimes in East Timor and other areas. Moreover, the disruption in Maluku and Laskar Jihad's conjuring up of a separatist threat justified the expansion of the military's role in the region, as outbreaks of violence likewise have done in other areas of Indonesia.[30]

Unless the TNI factions working with Laskar Jihad have a strong attachment to the group and its ideals, however, they are likely to see no interest in sustaining its activities once it has outlived its usefulness. Here one can reflect on a range of precedents for the TNI assembling and/or co-operating with paramilitary or criminal groups, before later discarding them.[31] A recent example of this phenomenon is offered by the militia created in East Timor in 1998–99, some of whose redundant leaders now claim to live in fear of TNI assassination.[32]

Support from or toleration by the security forces in Maluku is vital to Laskar Jihad's capacity to operate. While such support may reflect the personal sympathies of individual officers concerned, it is not a sustainable basis for Laskar Jihad's position in the long term. Military co-operation, moreover, is certainly not a reflection of popular grassroots support among Indonesian Muslims. In view of the low credibility of the TNI, the association is, in fact, likely to dissuade many Indonesian Muslims from supporting Laskar Jihad.

Since its inception, Laskar Jihad has enjoyed the active support of other conservative Muslim groups. Organizations such as KISDI, DDII and FPI (Front for the Defence of Islam) have backed Laskar Jihad's activities with rallies, demonstrations, and endorsements in media publications. Prominent conservative Muslim activists act as advisers to the group; for example, Eggy Sudjana is one of Ja'far Umar Thalib's legal representatives. Affiliated conservative Muslim political parties have also been at the core of Laskar Jihad's support network. Ahmad

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Sumargono, PBB member of the DPR (House of Representatives) and leader of KISDI, appears to have acted as an unofficial spokesman on behalf of the group during the period when it was being convened at Bogor in April 2000. Important PBB links extend to Maluku itself, where local PBB (and DDII) leader Ali Fauzi is commander of the locally-levied Ambon Mujahidin.

The attitude towards Laskar Jihad of mainstream modernist Muslim parties and associations, however, has been far more equivocal. As outlined above, in January 2000, conservative activists' exploitation of a public outcry over the death of Muslims in Halmahera, combined with the post-election disarray of modernist Muslim politicians, enabled them to push more mainstream leaders into supporting calls for *jihad*. Since then, Laskar Jihad and its supporters have on occasion successfully used media campaigns to create similar conditions in which moderate Muslim leaders have felt forced to choose between endorsing Laskar Jihad's position (or at least criticizing their enemies) and being perceived to desert the interests of Indonesian Muslims. Such episodes have arisen from the arrest of Ja'far Umar Thalib on 4 May 2001 (for allegedly ordering the public stoning of one of his followers in Ambon), and also the Yon Gab (TNI combined battalion) attack on Laskar Jihad in Kota Ambon (Ambon town) on 14 June 2001.[33] Following these events, several Muslim organizations, including the MUI (Indonesian Council of Preachers), whose Ambon office has hostile relations with Laskar Jihad, and the youth wing of Muhammadiyah, were moved to speak out against the arrest and against Yon Gab.[34] Their sentiments were echoed by provincial leaders of mainstream Muslim parties, such as the PPP and PAN. The pressure that Laskar Jihad succeeded in generating, following the Yon Gab attack, appeared to account for the hasty transfer out of Maluku of the battalion's commander, I Made Yasa, just three weeks later.[35]

These moments are the closest that Laskar Jihad has come to capturing the position of the rallying point for Indonesian Muslims; however, they have been few and far between. Although some junior representatives of the PPP and PAN have continued to show support for Laskar Jihad, securing the wholehearted backing of the leaders of mainstream modernist Muslim parties and mass-membership organizations has proved beyond the conservative Muslims since January 2000. The elusiveness of such moments in part reflects the peripheral position in Indonesia, both geographically and politically, of the conflict in Maluku. It is also indicative of the reluctance of mainstream Muslim figures to endorse an enterprise launched by abrasive and unscrupulous conservative Muslim groups which command little popular support.

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The composition of Laskar Jihad's 3,000–10,000-strong membership has been a source of considerable speculation.[36] Some observers have suggested that as many as 80 per cent of its members are, in fact, serving members of the TNI, while others have alleged the involvement of substantial numbers of foreigners in the group's ranks.[37] Laskar Jihad spokesmen state that their membership reflects a genuine cross-section of Indonesian society, although the organization's website stresses that its members "mostly are university students in Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Sumatra".[38] The group's spokesmen claim that recruits come from *pesantren* (Islamic schools) run by teachers sympathetic to Laskar Jihad, or have been inspired to join by conservative Muslim media publications.[39] In tapping into such sources of support, Laskar Jihad is drawing on the efforts of organizations such as DDII and KISDI, both of which have long cultivated followings on university campuses and in *pesantren* for their campaigns against pluralism and Western political values, such as liberal democracy and human rights.[40]

While examining Laskar Jihad's membership reveals more about the kinds of support that conservative Islam in Indonesia can draw on, the usefulness of such analysis has to be set in the context of the small numbers the group has succeeded in recruiting. Ultimately, the mobilization of 3,000–10,000 from a population of around 185 million Muslims does not amount to a mass movement or signify a sea-change in the character of Indonesian Islam. Even Laskar Jihad members drawn from supposed hotbeds of radical Islam, such as ITB (the Bandung Institute of Technology) admit that their peers and families were perplexed by their decision to join the *jihad*.[41] While Laskar Jihad leaders have claimed that their ranks are expanding, there are grounds for questioning this assertion. Since closing their training camp in Bogor in April 2000, Laskar Jihad, has, by its own admission, not held any further large-scale training and recruiting programmes and state that training is now only conducted in Ambon itself.[42] While both the group and its allies claim that new members are still being recruited, they are reluctant to give any precise figures.[43]

The inability of conservative Islam to find broader support can be traced in part to the position of Islam under the New Order. Until Soeharto's final years and his cultivation of conservative modernist groups, the overtly political brand of Islam promoted by conservative Muslims was suppressed by the regime, which maintained a resolutely anti-sectarian stance and heavy restrictions on all political activity not under its control. Conversely, the New Order did offer space for other interpretations of modernist Islam, which promoted the progress of Muslims outside the realm of politics. This, combined with other social and educational policies of the Soeharto era, stimulated the emergence

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of a self-consciously Muslim middle class which had little affinity with the outlook of conservative hardliners.[44]

Groups representing conservative modernist Islam, such as the DDII, continued to maintain their core following among sections of the lower-middle and working classes and networks in *pesantren* and universities.[45] Since restrictions on their activities were lifted, however, they have not expanded their overall popular support among the *ummat*. This can partly be explained by conservative groups' belated alliance with discredited New Order interests. Moreover, they are promoting an authoritarian and exclusivist form of political Islam at a time when most indicators suggest that Indonesian Muslims are keen to consolidate the freedoms they have won since 1998.

Laskar Jihad: Activities, Impact and Prospects

Despite its protestations to the contrary, there can be little doubt that Laskar Jihad's emphasis in Maluku has been on paramilitary activity. The group's involvement in offensives against Christian communities reflects Indonesian conservative Muslims' long-held view of Christianity as a threat. More specifically, the manner of the attacks and Laskar Jihad's public pronouncements point to an attempt to displace and expel Christians from Maluku and thus alter the region's ethno-religious balance.[46]

Laskar Jihad employs tactics designed to undermine any prospect of reconciliation between Christians and Muslims. Just one example is the group's use of snipers in Kota Ambon, who target civilians and thus reinforce the atmosphere of fear and suspicion which pervades both communities in the town.[47] Such violence forms the major part of a sustained effort to polarize the two communities ever more completely. This objective is also pursued via such measures as the severing of intercommunal commercial relations.[48] The desire for communal segregation derives in part from the hardline modernist antipathy towards pluralism and secular society.

At another level Laskar Jihad's emphasis on violence derives from basic self-interest: no conflict, no Laskar Jihad — only the maintenance of hostilities legitimates the group's position within Moluccan Muslim communities. Ensuring that the parameters of life for Moluccan Muslims are shaped (and narrowed) by constant interreligious violence, helps Laskar Jihad to overcome any reluctance on the part of their local co-religionists to define their loyalties and responses to the conflict solely on the basis of their faith. In order to equate identification as a Muslim with identification with Laskar Jihad, the group has taken steps to bring the symbols and centres of Muslim worship in Ambon under its control.[49]

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Beyond the use of violence for aims specific to Maluku itself, it has been suggested that Laskar Jihad has sought to provoke new outbreaks of fighting in order to pressure the government, or otherwise create an impression of democratic reform leading to instability in Indonesia.[50] Laskar Jihad's attempts to expel communities of Christians may also be calculated to create instability and communal tension in other areas of Indonesia forced to play host to large groups of Christian Moluccan refugees.[51]

While fighting Moluccan Christians is the most important aspect of Laskar Jihad's activities, the group has also carried out humanitarian and community work in Muslim areas of Maluku — for example, in establishing a fully-staffed hospital in Kota Ambon.[52] It has also sought to impose *Shariah* law in the zones under its control and to close down "places of sin".[53] Such measures represent a rejection of the institutions of the secularized state and the creation of an alternative model founded on the principles of conservative modernist Islam. They are also an important means of exercising control over local Muslims. These actions notwithstanding, Laskar Jihad's insistence that their *jihad* is based primarily around humanitarian assistance and *dakwah* predication cannot be accepted at face value. While Ja'far Umar Thalib claims that members of the Laskar Jihad are "basically religious preachers, armed with religious knowledge to preach to locals", more junior spokesmen for his organization admit that few of their number have sufficient knowledge of Islam to preach to Moluccan Muslims.[54]

All observers agree that the intervention in Maluku by Laskar Jihad has had a very substantial impact on the complexion and intensity of the conflict. The group's presence has undoubtedly eliminated any chance that may have existed of the Christians scoring a military victory over their Moluccan Muslim opponents.[55] Furthermore, Laskar Jihad has clearly succeeded in its goal of prolonging and deepening the conflict.

Among Muslim communities in those areas of Maluku in which it operates, Laskar Jihad has succeeded in asserting itself as a symbol of Islam and *pahlawan* (champion or hero) for local Muslims, regardless of their empathy with Laskar Jihad's brand of conservative Islam.[56] Observers on all sides, for example, agree that Laskar Jihad very effectively presented the Yon Gab attacks on its personnel and premises on 14 June 2001 as an attack on all Moluccan Muslims, and that this served to entrench the group's position within Maluku.[57] Other factors facilitating this entrenchment include Laskar Jihad's exploitation of factionalism within the local Muslim leadership, and, above all, its capacity for defending Moluccan Muslims from Christian attack. Alongside its alliances with factions of the TNI, the position Laskar

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Jihad has carved out for itself within Maluku has so far helped to deter sustained attempts by the central government to dislodge it.

Laskar Jihad's undoubted impact in Maluku, must, however, be put in context. The scope of the group's activities and influence have only been made possible by civil war, the almost total breakdown of state control, and the convergence of Laskar Jihad's agenda with that of other groups. While Laskar Jihad has succeeded in intensifying the polarization of the communities in the region, it has merely exacerbated a situation which pre-dated its arrival.

Viewed in this perspective, Laskar Jihad's achievements in Maluku have, in many ways, been strikingly limited. Although the group has repeatedly attacked Christian settlements, it has had little success in redrawing communal boundaries, which have changed little since it arrived in the region.[58] Religious segregation has now been effected in most areas previously inhabited by both Christians and Muslims.[59] Even here, however, Laskar Jihad has not been entirely successful, failing to break down the mixed Catholic and Muslim community of Wayame in Ambon, for example.[60]

Laskar Jihad's zone of operations has not expanded greatly since the weeks following its arrival in Maluku in April–May 2001. Although the trigger for its intervention was atrocities committed against Muslims in Halmahera, North Maluku, Laskar Jihad has had minimal involvement in the conflict in the northern areas. The group's commanders were, at an early stage, informed by their North Moluccan Mujahidin counterparts that their assistance was surplus to requirements, and they were subsequently deterred from interfering in the province by North Maluku's assertive acting governor.[61] In the southern regions of Maluku, meanwhile, a reconciliation process has prevented Laskar Jihad from making an impact. Even in those areas in which it is well entrenched, observers note rising tensions between the non-Moluccan Laskar Jihad and local Muslim communities which resent the group's domineering behaviour.[62] This underlines the impression that the organization is likely to maintain its position of power only as long as the violence continues.

In the context of Indonesia as a whole, Laskar Jihad's impact has been highly localized. Although it has recently tried to establish itself in Poso, the general absence of the particular kind of religious strife the group requires as a precursor for further *jihad* has made large-scale expansion of its activities difficult.[63] In Maluku, the group has failed to involve significant numbers of Indonesian Muslims in its campaign. Whereas circumstances have largely compelled Moluccan Muslims to accept partisanship based on religion, Laskar Jihad's rhetoric has not persuaded their co-religionists elsewhere in Indonesia to respond to the conflict in the same way.

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As noted, there have been occasions on which Laskar Jihad and its conservative Muslim backers have been momentarily able to elicit support from more moderate Muslim groups. However, apart from the initial rally of 7 January 2000, these rare successes have not come in the context of Laskar Jihad generating new momentum for its activities. They have instead occurred in desperate situations in which the organization has found the need to portray itself as a victim: notably the arrest of Ja'far Umar Thalib and the Yon Gab offensive in Kota Ambon. In the latter case, Laskar Jihad's response suggested that it believed it could not rely on its credibility as an Islamic organization to bail itself out of trouble. Rather than referring to the Middle Eastern *ulamas' fatwas* that it claims to legitimate its activities in Maluku, Laskar Jihad has based its robust media campaign against the "communist" Yon Gab around the same "Western" values it argues that Indonesian Muslims should reject, leading with the accusation that Yon Gab's actions constituted gross violations of Laskar Jihad members' human rights.[64]

While the launching of Laskar Jihad has generated for Muslim hardliners considerable attention, it has failed to make a serious impact on Indonesian politics at the national level. The group's activities have not afforded conservative Muslims significant political leverage in Jakarta. As the transfer of presidential office from Wahid to Megawati in 2000 demonstrated, Laskar Jihad has been unable to shake the hold on power of its pluralist political opponents.

The ascendance of Megawati in many ways encapsulates the increasing difficulties Laskar Jihad and its conservative supporters are now facing. Megawati is perceived as representing a range of political values directly antithetical to those of Laskar Jihad: notably, secular nationalism, pluralism, and democracy. Moreover, in contrast to the rickety presidential platform of Abdurrahman Wahid, who acquired the office via elaborate political horse-trading, Megawati has become President with a mandate from the electorate, together with endorsement by the military and modernist Muslim coalition partners (notably the PPP), who had previously echoed conservative Muslims' opposition to the idea of a female President. The conservatives are thus faced with a much stronger President, who has neither use nor sympathy for groups such as Laskar Jihad, and who has formed alliances with élite groups (mainstream modernist Muslim politicians and the TNI), on whom Laskar Jihad depends for support.

This inauspicious outlook does not necessarily signal Laskar Jihad's imminent collapse. In the short-term, the Megawati government faces several political hurdles it may wish to clear before turning its attention to clamping down on Laskar Jihad. Not least of these is securing its

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relationship with the army, which could be tested by international pressure for the prosecution of TNI officers who oversaw the destruction of East Timor in September 1999. That the government is choosing to leave the Laskar Jihad issue on the back-burner reflects in part the range of complex challenges it faces. It also highlights the minimal political threat that the group in fact poses.

If anything, the impact of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States may be to hasten rather than avert government action against Laskar Jihad. Although the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan caused considerable disquiet among Muslims in Indonesia, it did not precipitate a sudden surge in support for the exclusivist brand of Islam espoused by the Taliban, nor the international terror agenda of Osama bin Laden. For Indonesia, the key outcome may prove to be less the immediate reaction of the country's Muslim population than the acceleration of the U.S. government's efforts to see the resumption of ties with the Indonesian military. Such an eventuality would offer the TNI a degree of political rehabilitation and access to resources far more valuable than continued connections with militant Muslim fringe groups. As the comments of Paul Wolfowitz and others make clear, a condition of any kind of U.S. *rapprochement* with the TNI would undoubtedly be the elimination of Laskar Jihad.

As already observed, Laskar Jihad has been most successful in finding support beyond its narrow core constituency when portraying itself, or those it purports to defend, as victims of aggression. Ironically, the group's best chance of securing sympathy from the Indonesian *ummat* might come through a badly timed or executed government operation against it, although this can hardly be a scenario Laskar Jihad would wish to pin its hopes on.

In the aftermath of 11 September, Laskar Jihad has chosen to concentrate on reigniting the conflict between Christians and Muslims in the vicinity of Poso, Central Sulawesi, perhaps gambling on greater popular approval within Indonesia following the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan. The extent of Laskar Jihad's commitment in the Poso region is not yet clear. Assessment of the intervention, however, requires consideration of the limitations on Laskar Jihad's resources and available manpower. There is little evidence to suggest a sudden expansion in the group's capacities sufficient to cover two similarly vigorous campaigns in different parts of Indonesia. If the group has indeed decided to concentrate its efforts on Sulawesi, this will almost certainly necessitate a commensurate downsizing of its operations in Maluku. Needless to say, a withdrawal from Maluku at this stage would be a significant admission of the failure of the *jihad* to achieve its objectives.

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Conclusion

In conclusion, we can see that the capacity of conservative modernist Muslims to launch Laskar Jihad in early 2000 reflected a position of political influence built up during the last years of Soeharto's presidency and the brief period of Habibie's presidency. The stimulus for Laskar Jihad was the threat posed to this influence by Indonesia's movement towards greater democracy. The *jihad* project revealed the ability of hard-line Muslim groups to take advantage of the breakdown in state control wrought by the conditions of political transition. These groups, moreover, showed themselves adept at using alliances with other interests threatened by political reform, and skilful in exploiting the disarray of modernist Muslim rivals. In the context of an increasingly hostile political environment, Laskar Jihad was an attempt to shore up the position of conservative Islam and to hamper the unwelcome democratic transition in whatever way possible. It sought to overturn the *ummat's* allegiance to secular or pluralist political parties in favour of asserting religion as an overriding point of identity. However, although the creation of Laskar Jihad was nothing if not audacious, aspects of the venture reveal weaknesses in the conservative position even at the moment of its inception. The Laskar Jihad experience highlights the paucity of causes capable of rallying the Indonesian *ummat* behind the self-appointed champions of Islam. Maluku, while in some senses an obvious venue for conservative Muslim intervention, was in many respects a less than ideal choice, principally because of its lack of political significance.

The emergence of Laskar Jihad shows how conservative Muslims have been able to secure backing from powerful sections of the Indonesian military, as well as a network of foreign funders. However, it also reveals the low level of support for their brand of political Islam among Indonesian Muslims. This limited support reflects the failure of conservative Muslim groups to convert state patronage during the last years of the New Order into a significant broadening of their constituency. Moreover, the uncompromising approach of the conservatives has hindered their efforts to gain the endorsement of mainstream Muslim political parties and associations. Critically, the activities of Laskar Jihad have not been of sufficient scope to touch the lives of most Indonesian Muslims, let alone to persuade them to take sides in the struggle between the group and its opponents.

To sum up, while the Laskar Jihad venture is spectacular, not to mention violently destructive, it illuminates fundamental fragilities in the position of its conservative Muslim architects. For conservative Islam in Indonesia, Laskar Jihad constitutes less a dramatic advance, so much as a bloody rear-guard action.

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NOTES

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1. *Kompas*, 30 March 2001.
2. *Jakarta Post*, 11 September 2000.
3. Robert W. Hefner, "Co-option, Enmitization and Democracy: The Modernist Muslim Dilemma in Indonesia" (Paper prepared for the conference on "Consolidating Indonesian Democracy", Ohio State University, 11–13 May 2001), pp. 17–18.
4. Robert W. Hefner, "Print Islam: Mass Media and Ideological Rivalries among Indonesian Muslims", *Indonesia* 64 (October 1997).
5. Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam* (Princeton University Press, 2000), p.151.
6. Robert W. Hefner, "Cooption, Enmitization and Democracy: The Modernist Muslim Dilemma in Indonesia", p. 29.
7. *Jakarta Post*, 10 February 2000.
8. According to Moluccan sociologist Tamrin Amal Tomagola, Amien Rais told him after the 7 January rally that he had been "cornered" by the Muslim outcry against the Halmahera killings. Political pressure had left him with no choice but to offer his endorsement of conservative Muslims' *jihad* initiative. Interview, 29 June 2001.
9. International Crisis Group, Indonesia, *Overcoming Murder and Chaos in Maluku*, ICG Asia Report No.10 (19 December 2000), p. 8.
10. For contrasting interpretations of the involvement of local and national élites in triggering the conflict in Maluku, see George Aditjondro, "Guns, Pamphlets and Handie-Talkies: How the military exploited local ethno-religious tensions in Maluku to preserve their political and economic privileges" (Paper prepared for the Conference on "Conflicts and Violence in Indonesia", Humboldt University, Berlin, 3–5 July 2000); and Gerry Van Klinken, "The Maluku wars: Bringing Society Back In", *Indonesia* 71 (April 2001).
11. A Muslim leader from Ambon claims that he and other Muslims discovered at the start of the conflict that Moluccans in the Netherlands were shipping guns to the Christians in Ambon, hidden in coffins with false bottoms. Interview, April 2001.
12. John T. Sidel, "Macet Total: Logics of Circulation and Accumulation in the Demise of Indonesia's New Order", *Indonesia* 66 (October 1998): 166–67.
13. Jubilee Campaign, UK, *Analysis of the Sectarian Conflict in Maluku and its Role in the Islamicisation of Indonesia* (Jubilee Campaign, UK, December 1999), pp.3, 7.
14. Interview with Dr Fawzy A.R., Head, Yogyakarta branch of the United Development Party (PPP), 22 June 2001.
15. *Jakarta Post*, 15 May 2000.
16. Moluccan Muslims allege that Christians have resurrected the RMS (Republik Maluku Selatan or Republic of South Moluccas) separatist movement. The original RMS was an unsuccessful attempt by a group of predominantly Christian members of the Moluccan élite to establish a separate state, outside the nascent Republic of Indonesia, in the early 1950s.
17. Interview with Laskar Jihad spokesmen, 29 June 2001.
18. Ibid.
19. *Antara*, 14 June 2001.
20. Aditjondro, op. cit.
21. Interview with Laskar Jihad spokesmen, 29 June 2001. Interview with Ichsan Malik, Facilitator, *Baku Bae* Maluku reconciliation programme, 26 June 2001.
22. Interview with Laskar Jihad spokesmen, 29 June 2001.
23. *Jakarta Post*, 15 May 2000.

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24. Ibid.
25. Anonymous interview with an Indonesian analyst of the Maluku conflict, June 2001. This analyst claims to have videotaped footage of former Chief of Police in Maluku, Firman Gani, helping to organize a Laskar Jihad operation. See International Crisis Group, Indonesia, *Overcoming Murder and Chaos in Maluku*, p. 20.
26. Greg Fealy, "Inside the Laskar Jihad", *Inside Indonesia* (January–March 2001), p. 29.
27. Ibid.
28. Interview with Laskar Jihad spokesmen, 29 June 2001.
29. Personal communication with Jonathan Miller, maker of "A 21st Century War" documentary film for Channel 4 (UK).
30. Such as Aceh and West Kalimantan, as well as Maluku.
31. This trend can be traced all the way back to the creation of the TNI in 1947 and its co-optation of the first Indonesian paramilitary groups adopting the moniker *lasykar* during the Indonesian Revolution. Another more recent case was the use of criminals during the 1982 elections, who were subsequently murdered in the so-called "Petrus" killings. Robert Cribb, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries – The Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution 1945-1949* (University of Hawaii Press, 1991).
32. *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 December 2000.
33. *Tempo*, 15 May 2001.
34. Interview with Human Rights Representative, Moluccan Protestant Church, 27 June 2001.
35. According to Yogyakarta region PPP leader, Dr Fawzy A.R., on 14 June, Yon Gab dragged 20 people out of their houses in Kebun Cengkeh, Kota Ambon, made them lie down in the street and then ran them over with a truck. Interview, 22 June 2001. *Pikiran Rakyat*, 10 May 2001; and *Jakarta Post*, 12 May 2001.
36. Laskar Jihad spokesmen stated in June 2001 that there were 3,000 Laskar Jihad personnel in Maluku. Other estimates have been as high as 10,000. Interview, 29 June 2001.
37. Ichsan Malik, Facilitator for the *Baku Bae* Maluku Reconciliation Programme, visited Laskar Jihad's headquarters in 2000 and estimated that perhaps as many as 80 per cent of the group's members were TNI personnel. Interview, 26 June 2001.

    This view that a proportion of the Laskar Jihad are in fact soldiers is echoed by other researchers of the conflict, as well as eyewitness accounts of soldiers disguised in white robes launching attacks on Christian villages. Aditjondro, op. cit.

    TNI spokesman Air Rear-Admiral Graito Usodo has admitted that "there are some troops roaming around and creating chaos outside the chain of command and some even joined the Laskar Jihad warriors". *Jakarta Post*, 1 March 2001.

    It is commonly alleged that Laskar Jihad forces include foreign fighters from countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan. Laskar Jihad has admitted that it has received assistance from a few foreign volunteers, but say that these men have come of their own volition and only take part in humanitarian activities. Interview with Laskar Jihad spokesmen, 29 June 2001. An assessment of these claims is complicated by the fact that the locally levied Mujahidin forces in Maluku have recruited a number of foreign fighters who have no formal connection with Laskar Jihad. Philip Hatch-Barnwell, unpublished journal account of working in Maluku with Kompak, a Muslim relief organization affiliated with DDII, September to November 2000.
38. Interview with Laskar Jihad spokesmen, 29 June 2001. Press release, laskarjihad.or.id, 10 May 2001. A Muslim leader in Ambon claims that Laskar Jihad has attempted to coerce Muslim villages in Maluku into providing it with recruits. Interview, 1 April 2001.
39. Interview with Laskar Jihad spokesmen, 29 June 2001.

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40. Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, pp.109–10.
41. Interview with Laskar Jihad spokesmen, 29 June 2001.
42. One of Laskar Jihad's training camps in Ambon is the formerly Christian village of Waai, which was attacked and largely destroyed by Laskar Jihad in July 2000. *Jakarta Post*, 28 March 2001.
43. Interview with Laskar Jihad spokesmen, 29 June 2001. Interview with Dr Fawzy A.R., leader of the Yogyakarta branch of the United Development Party (PPP), 22 June 2001.
44. John T. Sidel, "Macet Total: Logics of Circulation and Accumulation in the Demise of Indonesia's New Order", *Indonesia* 66 (October 1998): 171–72.
45. Robert W. Hefner, "Print Islam: Mass Media and Ideological Rivalries among Indonesian Muslims", *Indonesia* 64 (October 1997): 91.
46. *Jakarta Post*, 11 September 2000.
47. Paul Brass analyses the role played in instigating and sustaining communal violence in northern India by "fire-tenders" who form part of managed riot networks. Paul R. Brass, *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence* (Princeton University Press, 1997).
48. Interview with a representative of Baileo, a Moluccan non-government organization (NGO), 27 June 2001. FKAWJ press release, 4 May 2001.
49. Interview with a member of a conflict resolution team from Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, 20 June 2001.

    Domination of Maluku's Islamic institutions by an outside group led by a preacher of Arab extraction (Ja'far Umar Thalib is of Yemeni descent) constitutes a somewhat ironic development in the context of Islam in the region. Richard Chauvel writes that the erosion of the traditional religious authority of Arab preachers in Kota Ambon was a significant element of what he terms the "emancipation of the (Moluccan) Moslem community" in Ambon during the 1930s. Richard Chauvel, *Nationalists, Soldiers and Separatists* (Leiden: KILTV Press, 1990), pp. 163–64.
50. Interview with Human Rights Representative, Moluccan Protestant Church, 18 April 2001.
51. The displacing of communities for strategic ends was carried out within Aceh by both the TNI and the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka), for example.
52. Interview with Dr Fawzy A.R., leader of the Yogyakarta branch of the United Development Party (PPP), 22 June 2001.
53. FKAWJ press release, 25 March 2001.
54. *Jakarta Post*, 15 May 2000. Interview with Laskar Jihad spokesmen, 29 June 2001.
55. International Crisis Group, Indonesia, *Overcoming Murder and Chaos in Maluku*, p. iii.
56. Interview with Ichsan Malik, Facilitator, *Baku Bae* Maluku Reconciliation Programme, 26 June 2001.
57. Interview with a member of a conflict resolution team from Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, 20 June 2001. Interview with Human Rights Representative, Moluccan Protestant Church, 27 June 2001.
58. Interview with Ichsan Malik, Facilitator, *Baku Bae* Maluku Reconciliation Programme, 26 June 2001.
59. Ibid.
60. Interview with Laskar Jihad spokesmen, 29 June 2001.
61. Interview with Moluccan sociologist Tamrin Amal Tomagola, 29 June 2001.
62. Philip Hatch-Barnwell, op. cit. Personal communication with Jonathan Miller, maker of "A 21st Century War" documentary film for Channel 4 (UK). Interview with a member of a conflict resolution team from Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta,

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20 June 2001. Interview with a Muslim leader from Ambon, 1 April 2001. Muslim residents of Tial village were reported as complaining about the unwanted presence of Laskar Jihad in their village. *Jakarta Post*, 8 November 2000.

63. Laskar Jihad has also investigated the feasibility of involving itself in the communal violence in Sampit, Kalimantan. Interview with Laskar Jihad spokesmen, 29 June 2001.

64. On 25 June 2001, Ja'far Umar Thalib went in person to the office of leading human rights NGO YLBHI to complain that his followers' human rights were being abused. Interview with Ichsan Malik, Facilitator, *Baku Bae* Maluku Reconciliation Programme, 26 June 2001.

On a previous occasion, following a Yon Gab raid against a Muslim base in Kota Ambon, Ja'far lodged similar complaints with the state human rights organization Komnas HAM. *Kompas*, 10 February 2001.

This concern with human rights might be contrasted with the vigorous critique of the Western human rights doctrine by Laskar Jihad supporters KISDI. Robert Hefner, *Civil Islam*, p. 110.

The "communist" way of thinking of the Yon Gab is referred to by www.laskarjihad.or.id, 19 June 2001.

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The Continuation of Civil Unrest and Poverty in Mindanao

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This article examines the impact that civil unrest has had on Mindanao since the sixteenth century. It is argued that the ongoing unrest has largely been caused by the policies of the Philippine governments that followed the Spanish and American periods of colonization. The article focuses on the introduction of martial law in 1972, the growth of Muslim separatist movements, and the ensuing peace movements. In addition, it is recognized that the severe hardship and poverty that the people of Mindanao have endured during the last thirty years is attributable to government-backed military activities on the island.

Introduction

Ever since Spain colonized the Philippines in the sixteenth century, Manila has struggled to bring the Muslim population of Mindanao into the predominantly Catholic nation's fold. More than 400 years on, Muslim separatists in Mindanao, the southernmost region of the country, remain a thorn in Manila's side.[1] Conflict with Muslim separatists has raged on and off since the early 1970s, leaving more than 120,000 dead by government estimates, and stunting economic growth in one of the country's most impoverished regions.[2]

In late May 2001, Abu Sayyaf guerillas rounded up 20 hostages — 17 Filipinos and 3 Americans — and transported them to their hideout on Basilan, an island in the far south of the archipelago. Upon arrival, they seized 10 more hostages, mostly fishermen. Then the bloodbath began. By the end of the week, the Philippine military had attacked the guerillas and killed up to 14 fighters, including supreme Abu Sayyaf

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leader Khadaffy Janjalani. The Abu Sayyaf responded by storming a church and a hospital, taking another 200 hostages and killing parish priest Roy Nacorda. Reports were somewhat sketchy but the toll after 36 hours of fighting was up to 29 dead, including 13 soldiers and 5 civilians, and an unknown number wounded.

Well before the Abu Sayyaf came onto the scene and began its terrorist activities, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)-led revolution was the maturation of a series of Moro protests against the discriminatory treatment that they experienced within the Republic. The most infamous was the Jabidah massacre where a number of young Moro recruits undergoing secret military training in Corregidor were killed for alleged mutiny. This is not the place to recall the details of the story, but the upsurge of Moro protests, spiced with reports of secret military training, became one of two excuses for President Ferdinand Marcos' declaration of martial rule. For its part, martial law provided the impetus for the eruption of the Muslim armed struggle for national liberation from the clutches of alleged Philippine colonialism.

The purpose of this article is to discuss whether or not Philippine governments have caused the rise of civil unrest in Mindanao. In order to do this, the article will provide an overview of the extent of conflicts throughout the post-independence period that have been perhaps the single major cause of poverty on the island. Mindanao's poor are, of course, bearing the brunt of government policies to deal with the secessionists. For example, Heeney has argued that an estimated "700,000 people have been displaced by the fighting, and government projects and foreign aid are on hold".[3]

The article will first explain the origins of the armed struggle, concentrating on the impact of U.S. colonialism in relation to Mindanao. Secondly, the focus will shift to the internal conflicts and the post-independence period as the separatist movements began their quest for autonomy. Thirdly, probably the most significant political decision of the Philippines, martial law, will be explored. The different factions that emerged from the early 1960s will also be described. The article will then turn to the ensuing development of the Philippine peace movement, before finally looking at the poverty situation on Mindanao, which is largely a result of the continuous conflicts and neglect caused by the Philippine government's inadequate policies.

Origins and Factors of the Filipino Muslim Armed Struggle

The tenacity of the Filipino Muslim armed struggle is an intriguing fact in Philippine history. The Filipino Muslims tested the energies of the Spanish government for over 300 years and challenged the military

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power of the United States for almost half a century. More importantly, however, they have seriously tested the Filipino capacity to rule and to unite, something that had stood the test of time, except perhaps in 1986 with the fall of the Marcos regime. The determined efforts of the Spanish government and the Christian Filipinos to stop Muslim raids north of Mindanao made the Muslims "conscious of their own weaknesses"[4] and the need for new strategies.[5]

With the arrival of the United States in 1898, the history of the Philippines began to be reshaped, particularly in the southern islands, as the Muslims (Moros) tried to reassert their ownership or rights to Mindanao. Tan argues that there were four factors responsible for the many uprisings, incidents, and movements in the Philippines during the first four decades of the twentieth century:

> *American colonialism*, a system of control which reduced traditional leaders to virtual impotence; *religious beliefs*, which refer to prevailing Muslim conviction that Muslim welfare and destiny were in the hands of God; *government policies*, that consisted of theories of action used in relation to the Muslim problem; and *local rivalries*, which refers to persisting feuds in Muslim societies involving families, clans or datuships.[6]

As the situation deteriorated, the Moros found they could not match the Americans in battles on the seas off northern Mindanao, as they realized that gunboats were much more effective. Clashes between the Americans and the Muslims became more severe on land as the U.S. military went about establishing colonial rule throughout the Philippines.

Anti-American, Christian, Government, and Internal Rivalries

The anti-American nature of Muslim violence was basically anti-militaristic. The American military was in the process of simply enforcing the colonial system and the Muslims did not suffer from any economic impositions or exactions.[7] The Moros anti-American reaction was, therefore, not the result of colonial exploitation but primarily the product of Muslim ethnic pride, which was combined with an enthusiastic sense of freedom and individualism. American militarism in Mindanao, therefore, developed a type of élitism that challenged or even threatened the Muslim warrior's code of honour. In contrast, the Muslim warrior tradition was "mainly rooted in the building of the warrior qualities of courage and individualism".[8] The frustrations of an unyielding U.S. military, combined with the added impetus of a Christian takeover led, according to Tan, to the "anti-Christian character of Muslim movements [which] was essentially related to Muslim anti-colonialism. Anti-Christianism, therefore, became a

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necessary element in the Muslim struggle against American militarism."[9]

Adding to the constant pressure the Americans and Christians placed on the legitimacy of the Moros was the vigorous enforcement of government policies that affected Muslim customs and practices. The policies included disarmament, taxation, compulsory military training, compulsory education, the anti-slavery law, and the court system, all of which caused severe disturbances.[10]

Collectively, the anti-American, anti-Christian, and anti-government disturbances were external conflicts in the sense that they represented Muslim answers to three inter-related challenges to Muslim societies from the outside world. The ability and capacity of the Muslims to meet these challenges were affected substantially by the internal problems and dissension similar in nature to the conflict patterns in the Islamic world.[11] It can be argued that internal rivalries and conflicts in Muslim societies during the early years of the U.S. regime seriously hampered the capacity of the Muslims to challenge such a united group as the superior force of the colonial government.

Resettlement Programmes, Opening the Frontier

Mastura has argued that in 1913 and the years that followed, several agricultural colonies in different parts of Mindanao were established. Among their principal objectives were the following:

> *Politically*, they were organized to show that the Christian homestead seekers and the non-Christian communities of Mindanao could live together as neighbours in peace and harmony;
> *Economically*, they were established to hasten the development and cultivation of large tracts of fertile agricultural land in Mindanao, thereby making the region contribute to national development through economic production.[12]

It is important to mention that these objectives "achieved for the government the fundamental policy to incorporate the region into a united Philippines, to be governed under common political institutions".[13] By doing so, the government opened the way for voluntary and involuntary migration. However, the inflow of settlers was so severe that by 1948, where once the indigenous population predominated, they now had become the numerical minorities. Crystal has argued that "the Moros ... lost their lands to the settlers through the operation of law. Their displacement and dispossession in their own ancestral lands was legal."[14] As the ownership of land depended on land title, it became harder for the Moros to lay valid claims on their ownership or right to their ancestral properties. Hayase has added: "the American colonial government made it a principle of policy to encourage the

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taking up of small landholdings".[15] To be fair to the Americans, they did do their best to give the Moros the opportunity to press claims to land ownership. However, in most cases the actual size of allocation was rather small compared with the Christians who, according to Crystal, "on the other hand, used the legalities of land titling to, unwittingly or otherwise, landgrab from local inhabitants".[16]

Collier has summed up the Mindanao situation by arguing that:

> The militarization, lawlessness and land grabbing which are such important parts of the Mindanao story provide us with more of a clue about the nature of society and revolution on the island. Rather than seeking to restore traditional institutions, it seems possible that revolutionaries in frontier societies are attempting to create structures of their own to fill an institutional vacuum.[17]

Immediately before independence in 1946, the Moro leaders submitted a memorandum to the U.S. government stating "[they did not] want to be included in the Philippines independence".[18] The United States did not accept the proposal, and thus in 1946 the newly independent Philippines had two major religious communities in Mindanao, that is, the Muslims and the Catholics.[19] The Philippines, therefore, became a united nation, as Selochan has pointed out:

> On 4 July 1946, the U.S. granted independence to the Philippines, in keeping with its promise of self-determination for the islands. The Philippines thus became the first independent democratic country in Asia. At independence the Philippines political system was modeled on that of the United States, where the constitution required the armed forces to uphold civilian supremacy.[20]

However, the task of keeping Philippine unity — from the beginning of U.S. colonization to the handing down of independence — has not been easy. One of the main reasons for the disunity has been the levels of internal conflicts which persist amidst the poverty and economic problems associated with civil unrest.

Internal Conflicts and the Post-Independence Period

Internal conflicts have been a major determinant of political, social, and economic problems in the Philippines. In the case of Mindanao, the major problems underlying internal conflicts are mostly associated with the high incidences of poverty, particularly among the Muslims and the indigenous Lumads. However, to fully understand the main factors behind internal conflicts, it is important to look at the communities involved. Kaufmann has divided internal conflicts into two main categories: intra-community conflicts, and inter-community conflicts.

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> Intra-community conflicts are primarily about ideology, while inter-community conflicts are driven primarily by ethnic divisions. Intra-community conflicts are disputes within a single national or religious community. By contrast, inter-community conflicts are disputes between groups that see themselves as distinct ethnic, clan, or religious communities. One community may see the state as an expression of its particular identity to the exclusion of others, while others may demand special rights or a degree of autonomy from the state, or even see to secede to form their own state.[21]

Across Mindanao, militants have applied concerted pressure on non-Muslim communities, as they seek to impose their "rightful" claims. However strong the movement's causes are, one of the necessary components of their strategy is to obtain the support of other Muslims, a task that has proven quite difficult. Kaufmann has implied that the key to gaining support:

> Is the flexibility of individual loyalties, which are relatively fluid in ideological conflicts, but almost completely rigid in ethnic wars. In ethnic conflicts, there is no loyalty competition. While not everyone may be mobilized as an active fighter for their own group, hardly anyone ever becomes a supporter of the opposing ethnic group. In ethnic wars, however, neither side can afford to surrender any settlement because the enemy is likely to "cleanse" it by massacre, expulsion, or colonization, thus reducing or eliminating its value even if recaptured later.[22]

Post-Independence Tensions

The Moros continued their struggle for an independent Mindanao in post-independence Philippines. Rather than accommodating the demands of the Moros, the new Philippine government continued its colonial policy and adopted more regressive measures. It encouraged further migration of the Christian population into Mindanao. By the 1960s, the influx of settlers from northern and central Philippines made the Moros a virtual minority in their own land.[23]

The modern movement for Muslim separatism originated among a small set of Philippine Muslim students and intellectuals in the late 1960s. It gained popular support after two major incidents. Firstly, the "Corregidor Massacre" of Muslim military trainees raised emotions and caused an outcry from within the Muslim community. This was followed by "numerous demonstrations and manifestos demanding clarification from the government for the death of the Muslim youths allegedly trained [on Simonul Island] for what was known as the Jabibah forces".[24] Secondly, with the rise of instability on Mindanao, "the eruption of sectarian violence in Cotabato in [the early] 1970s, emerg[ed] as an armed secessionist front in response to the declaration

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of martial law by Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos in 1972".[25] Mindanao at this point was in a state of conflict that began to cause concerns for the local population as the island showed severe signs of poverty in most of its provinces. Tan contends that what followed was:

> [The] Mindanao crisis of 1971-72 [which] refers to the condition or state of extreme tension, fear, danger, insecurity, and utter distress which pervaded throughout the mainland off Mindanao for a considerable period of time and which brought about social, economic, personal, and political problems. The situation was precipitated by a series of circumstances, problems, incidents, and violence in Muslim areas as well as in the Christian communities of Lanao, Cotabato, Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.[26]

Hence, the Muslim problem became extremely critical, and the solution apparently lay in the Christian and Muslim emancipation from undesirable traditions and on the redefinition of national goals along economic and social lines. However, the problems of Mindanao were not just affecting the Muslims, they were also seriously hampering the livelihood of the rest of Mindanao's population. Ferdinand Marcos made the situation worse in his quest for a third term in office in a nation that was in a constant state of conflict and economic difficulties.

Martial Law

Marcos believed that in a developing country where the military was not occupied with external threats, it should assist in developing the country. Constitutionally deprived of seeking a third term, Marcos declared martial law in 1972 and facilitated the military in playing a larger role in government.[27] During the martial law period, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) became a powerful and dominant force in society and a political instrument for maintaining the corrupt and administratively inefficient regime of Marcos in power.[28] However, for the MNLF, martial law presented a threat to the way of life of the Muslim community. To protect their community, they engaged the AFP in a bloody war that commenced soon after martial law was declared. Intense fighting only abated after the Tripoli Agreement (to be discussed later) was signed between the Marcos regime and the MNLF in 1975. Under the agreement, autonomy was promised to certain Muslim-dominated provinces. Marcos, however, did not adhere to the agreement and sporadic fighting between the AFP and the MNLF continued throughout the period his regime was in power.[29]

The conflict that Mindanao has faced since the 1970s is closely tied to the economic problems the Philippines is facing at the beginning of

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the twenty-first century. The alienation and anger of the Muslims is fostered by the stagnation of the Muslim areas; and the MNLF, and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) insurrections reflect the discontent of most Muslims, particularly youths. By its oppressiveness, the martial law regime of Marcos created the circumstances for the people of Mindanao to realize their own situation. The Lumads, the Muslims, and the Christians began helping each other against martial law, and out of this was born the need to evaluate each other's point of view. However, the divisions have prevailed and persisted, particularly among the Muslims, as more factions have emerged to fight for what was perceived as their just cause. What began as one "Front" soon became a series of new factions, each seeking their own autonomy or independence.

Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)

The perceived anti-Muslim strategy of the state spurred the formation of the MNLF, an underground organization founded by Nur Misuari. At an organized meeting in mid-1971 Misuari became chairman, with the major goal of the MNLF being the liberation of the homeland of the Philippine Muslims from the Philippine State. However, the MNLF never controlled all the rebels fighting the government, and was, in fact, a loosely knit group.[30] Rosario-Braid has argued that the MNLF rebellion, which broke out in 1972, was the result of benign neglect by Christian leaders who failed to recognize the worth of Filipino Muslims.[31] The Moros, for their part, have been vocal in their demand for recognition of their distinctness as a people. Their political development reached its maturity under the leadership of the MNLF, which originally recommended independence from the colonial grasp of the Philippine State through armed struggle. They wanted their own "Bangsamoro Republic". In the face of these Moro and Lumad claims of their respective rights to self-determination, the Christian population has had to rethink its position. Although they constitute the majority population, it does not seem appropriate any more to speak in simple terms of majority rule. There are fundamental rights, interests, and sensibilities involved that should be considered.

The Tripoli Agreement

The Tripoli Agreement signed on 23 December 1976 between the Republic of the Philippines (RP) and the Moro National Liberation Front with the participation of the Quadripartite Commission of the Islamic Conference (OIC) changed the history of Mindanao. The OIC is composed of the foreign ministers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Arab Jamahiriya of Libya, Senegal, and Somalia.[32] Explaining the aims of the Tripoli Agreement, Dusnia, cited in Mastura, stated that it was:

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> ... not a treaty or an international agreement, it [was] rather a record of understanding between the Philippines Government and an organization of its own nationals to establish a region autonomy in Southern Philippines within the framework of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of the Philippines.[33]

The Tripoli Agreement marked the first step in negotiations between the MNLF rebels and the Philippine Government. However, it failed because of differences over the means of implementation and indecision on the part of the Marcos government. It was apparent that Marcos had used the Tripoli Agreement as a means of temporarily defusing the armed conflict, and weakening the MNLF. However, despite the failure and difficulties of its implementation, the "Tripoli Agreement became the benchmark for future negotiations between the MNLF and the government".[34] The OIC is still engaged in the affairs of Mindanao. On 16 October 2000, the head of the OIC, Alwi Shibad of Indonesia paid a visit to "get first hand information on the progress of the 1996 Peace Agreement".[35]

Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) first announced its independent existence (as distinct from the MNLF) in 1984. The establishment of a rival Moro "liberation front" resulted from a political division between Hashim Salamat and Nur Misuari, the chairman and vice-chairman respectively of the MNLF. McKenna mentioned that "the rift which had been developing for some time, first became public in December 1977, after the collapse of the second round of talks in Tripoli, Lybia, aimed at implementing the peace accord and cease-fire agreement".[36] On 10 July 2000, President Joseph Estrada declared that the military had overrun the MILF headquarters, Camp Abubakar, in Mindanao. The capture of Camp Abubakar, according to Estrada, sped up government efforts to bring genuine and lasting peace and development in Mindanao.[37]

Abu Sayyaf

The Abu Sayyaf, a group that "has strong links with Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden",[38] is the latest indication of a 300-year-old tradition of armed Muslim opposition to the Philippine State. Its aim is to establish an independent Islamic state in Mindanao. From about 1992, the Abu Sayyaf was regarded as a nuisance which posed no major threat to security in this turbulent part of the Philippines. Less than two years later, Abu Sayyaf, now translated as "swordbearer", graduated from being an individual letter-writing irritant into a group of feared fundamentalist guerillas or "extremist bandits".[39] In 1993, a ceasefire

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agreement with the MNLF appeared to be holding in much of Mindanao. However, the Abu Sayyaf "was [found to be] responsible for a series of hostilities, including the June 1993 kidnapping of 70 Christians, and the December 1993 bombing of a Philippines Airlines 747".[40] The Abu Sayyaf is still very active and has caused many concerns for the Philippine Government. On 23 April 2000, the extremist group kidnapped and held 21 mostly international businessmen from a Malaysian resort off Jolo Island. The kidnapping created outrage and received regular news coverage in the Philippines and the international press.[41] These kidnappings continue and have brought renewed Philippine Government initiatives to combat the problem. In an article in *Asiaweek*,[42] it was stated that if Manila does manage to destroy the Abu Sayyaf, it would close a chapter on a lingering Muslim insurgency that has long ravaged the Philippine south. Furthermore, the peace movement in Mindanao has gained momentum. With the added commitment of both the government and the people of Mindanao, it is very possible that peace will become a reality.

The Peace Movement

Rosario-Braid has emphasized that the "peace-movement started as a struggle against exploitation, inequalities in distribution of resources, and violation of human rights".[43] The insurgencies in the Philippines point to major tensions in Filipino values. The Moro separatist insurgency is rooted in the neglect by government and exploitation by the Christian majority of the Muslim communities in the Philippine south. Filipinos acknowledge the validity of the complaints of rebel groups. However, according to Mahangas (cited in Romero), they do not accept the armed-struggle approach to solving these problems.[44] For this reason, the various rebel groups have had very little public support. Interestingly, Rosario-Braid found that a "majority of the Muslims were on the government side; a majority of the objectors represented the Christian faith".[45] As a result, a positive outcome of the communication campaign was public awareness that the Lumads or indigenous people, consisting of several millions, and not the Muslims, actually dominated Mindanao.[46] Although never advocating armed struggle, the Lumads and their affiliate organizations indicated their desire to attain genuine autonomy within the Republic of the Philippines. They want to govern themselves in accordance with their own traditional laws. The Lumads, the Moros, and the Christians view one another not in numerical terms but as distinct peoples with their respective histories, identities, and dignity. As inhabitants of Mindanao, they also have a common destiny. The problem, however, is how to arrive at a common vision.

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Arena of Peace and Development

Hopes of a lasting peace flickered into life in 1996 when President Fidel Ramos convinced the oldest group of Muslim insurgents, the MNLF, to lay down its arms in exchange for limited autonomy. However, his successor, Joseph Estrada's hardline stance with the remaining guerillas altered the course of the peace process in Mindanao. Investment in Mindanao has all but ground to a halt. It is all the more salutary because the economy of the region was slowly improving. The 1996 Peace Accord and the formation of the East ASEAN Growth Area (EAGA) were attracting investments.

On 2 September 1996, the Philippine Government and the MNLF signed an historic Peace Agreement after decades of war that had exacted tens of thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of refugees in Mindanao, and the nearby Malaysian state of Sabah. The Peace Agreement ushered in a new arena or front, not only for the MNLF and the Philippine Government, but more so for the people of the southern Philippines — Muslims and Christians alike. The arena being defined was that of peace and development. In the language of the leadership of both the MNLF and the Philippine Government, it was a path more difficult than the path of war. The coverage of this new arena was the fourteen provinces and the nine cities that comprise the Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD). It is no accident that the same provinces are considered the poorest of the poor in the country in terms of minimum basic needs.

Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD)

After his appointment by President Ramos to the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), Nur Misuari was elected governor of the ARMM in 1996, a move that practically solved the MNLF problem. The SPCPD was set up as an executive body with a chairman, vice-chairman, and three members representing each of the three communities in Mindanao, that is, Muslims, Christians, and Lumad.[47] While Ramos reached a peace agreement with the MNLF, the underlying tension that generated the insurgency is likely to remain for some time. The government still maintains dialogues with the MILF, which continues with sporadic ambushes, kidnappings, and threats of separatism.[48] By placing Misuari in charge of both institutions, it was believed that the peace settlement would gain recognition among the Muslim community and demonstrate to non-Muslims that autonomy could benefit all groups.[49] Romero has argued that "the foundation for the solution of the separatist problem was in the form of the ARMM, formed in 1989 and inaugurated in 1990 following a plebiscite in which four provinces with predominantly Muslim populations opted to constitute the region: Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi."[50]

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The high poverty incidence in the said region inevitably makes the tasks and mission of peace and development difficult. In addition, while the national core dominates in the satisfaction of formal business requirements, it is also likely that political instability in Mindanao and periodic kidnappings of foreign nationals in peripheral regions provide strong personal reasons why foreign investors have attempted to avoid such areas.[51] Sheehan sums up the situation: "It's tough tempting investors to a place where kidnappings and bombing seem to be everyday events and half the passengers on your flight pick up their guns with their luggage after the plane lands."[52]

"Land of Unfulfilled Promises"

According to *Xinhua News Agency*, the peace and order situation in the Philippines is not encouraging.[53] While the military is deploying more troops to the battle against the MILF in Mindanao, the formal talks with the Abu Sayyaf have yet to open. As the internal conflicts drag on, foreign investors are pulling out their money from the country as well. Whilst there have been obvious difficulties in appeasing the internal conflicts, the Philippine Government is committed to the peace process and has been since the fall of Marcos in 1986. During the early 1980s, the situation in Mindanao deteriorated steadily. Although martial law was lifted in 1981, it was maintained in Mindanao. On 17 October 1983, the Philippine Government "was forced by the depletion of its foreign exchange reserves to declare a 90-day moratorium on the amortisation of its external debt, marking the onset of the worst balance-of-payments crisis in post-war Philippine history".[54] Visiting Mindanao on the eve of the 1986 elections, in a campaign speech Corazon Aquino described Mindanao as a "land of unfulfilled promises, a war zone, a land forced into fratricidal strife, a land where every day Filipino kills brother Filipino, a land of avaricious exploitation".[55] However, in this arena of unfulfilled promises can President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who has announced from the start of her presidency that she has no intention of suffering the humiliation dealt her predecessor, Joseph Estrada, in 2000, succeed in bringing peace to Mindanao. President Arroyo stressed that Estrada "succumbed to Malaysian and European pleas to hold the troops back"[56] and allowed Libya to broker a ransom deal. Arroyo has refused all negotiations and ordered 5,000 troops into the scattered Sulu archipelago to, in the words of operational commander Brigadier General Romeo Dominguez, "rescue and destroy". [57]

Economic Development

The Philippines is, to all intents and purposes, a "weak state". Like most countries in Southeast Asia, it is a creation of colonialism, marked

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by uneven economic development.[58] For Mindanao to attain peace and economic stability, Mindanaons have to continually push for reforms by advocating their concerns to the Philippine Government. Together with economic growth will come employment and a much better standard of living for all the communities in Mindanao. The major social problem facing the Philippines is the need to provide a consistently better performance in the future as regards employment and the distribution of income without sacrificing, but rather, enhancing growth.[59] That civil unrest and widespread poverty in Mindanao and the rest of the Philippines reflect a failure of development policy is well recognized. According to Balisacan:

> [T]he heavily capital-intensive, import-substituting development strategy which the country adhered to for several decades engendered inefficient industries, effectively penalized agriculture and labour-intensive exports, impeded backward activities, and stifled the country's competitiveness in the world market.[60]

Underdevelopment in Mindanao

Burton, furthermore, has argued that "Mindanao, despite its vast and rich natural resources and great economic potential has remained underdeveloped over the years".[61] People in the agricultural sector bear the heaviest share of the poverty burden as poverty in the Philippines is largely an agricultural phenomenon.[62] Once rural productivity fails to expand sufficiently, the urban industrial sector is likely to experience a shortage of food and/or capital goods.[63] The reduction of debt, or increasing the period for payment will not deal with the underlying problem: the basic structures of current international economic relations need to be overhauled. Mindanao seems to be trapped by underdevelopment which not only keeps the living standard of the employed low, but also perpetuates the hunger of the increasingly large unemployed segment of the population. As the size of the population of Mindanao continues to grow, there seems to be a genuine lack of family-planning programmes. The only advice development experts seem to be able to give is to cut down the population, so that reduced resources may be sufficient to feed it.

Conclusion

The conditions of life for most Mindanaons throughout the twentieth century and continuing into the twenty-first century have been for the most part a constant search for economic well-being and peace. However, until the fall of the Marcos regime in 1986, Mindanao was by far one of the most neglected islands of the entire Philippines, resulting in delayed economic growth and a lack of infrastructure. Beginning

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with the U.S. administration and the incorporation of the island as part of the Philippine nation, Mindanao has not progressed as well as some of the northern islands of the archipelago. Largely owing to political, economic, and social instability, Mindanao differs from the rest of the Philippines in that the confrontations between Muslims and Christians have, to an extent, persisted into the twenty-first century.

This article has demonstrated the intensity of the civil unrest in Mindanao by describing the problems caused by the MNLF, the MILF, the Abu Sayyaf, and the Philippine Government. Whilst the cause of insurgencies is largely attributable to secessionist movements from within the Philippines, that go as far back as the colonial periods of both Spain and the United States, the insurgencies have been more intense since the early 1960s. The persistence of insurgencies and the implementation of martial law in 1972, which incidentally remained in force in Mindanao well after it had been lifted in other parts of the Philippines, exacerbated the social and economic instability on the island. With the introduction of martial law, the insurgencies increased as the secessionists began to turn against the government and the military.

With the appointment of former MNLF leader Nur Misuari as head of the SPCPD, it was hoped that peace in Mindanao would become a reality. However, other factions, such as the MILF and Abu Sayyaf, have continued their quest for an independent Islamic state. In order to bring peace to Mindanao, the newly formed government of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, determined and committed to end the crisis in Mindanao, has approached the situation robustly. Faced with a group of career bandits, President Arroyo has had little choice but to come down with her promised "hail of bullets". Arroyo is keen to prove to the financial markets that her government suffers from none of the impotence of the Estrada administration, which proved so damaging to foreign capital and share prices during the final year of its curtailed presidency. Arroyo added strength to her rhetoric when she proposed that: "We must address this decisively to show the world that we can protect our citizens, our visitors, and our investors."[64]

NOTES

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Security, Development and Political Participation in Thailand: Alternative Currencies of Legitimacy

DUNCAN McCARGO

This article argues that Thailand's political élites have employed three different "currencies" in their quest for legitimacy since 1932. These "currencies" are defined as: security, development, and political accommodation or participation. Different currencies have enjoyed different degrees of salience according to prevailing domestic and international conditions. While security was a crucial legitimating rationale during the Cold War, since the economic crisis and the new constitution of 1997, political participation has loomed largest. The article examines the career of former army commander and prime minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, in order to illustrate the changing value of alternative sources of legitimacy from the early 1980s to the late 1990s. It argues that despite the growing importance of political participation, fundamental inequalities of power and resources persist in contemporary Thailand.

Introduction

In October 1997, faced with a huge economic crisis that had brought Thailand to its knees, elected premier Chavalit Yongchaiyudh sought a meeting with military chiefs in an apparent bid to stage a coup against himself. Chavalit — himself a former army commander — appears to have hoped that the military would support him in declaring a state of emergency.[1] Instead, the military chiefs told him to forget it. Chavalit was ousted by parliamentary means shortly afterwards, and replaced as prime minister by Democrat Party leader Chuan Leekpai. A few years earlier, no military commander could have resisted the opportunity to

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impose a security clampdown on behalf of an ex-military prime minister. This remarkable episode testified to the transformations which Thai politics had undergone during the 1990s: between the coup of 1991 and the non-coup of 1997, the security "card" had been significantly devalued.

This article explores the contrasting discourses of security, development, and political participation in Thailand. These three terms will be viewed essentially as constructions by the Thai élite, reflecting the experiences of a state that enjoyed an important strategic position during the Cold War, especially in the context of Vietnam. Élites have successfully traded in these three different "currencies" in order to legitimate their rule and preserve their power. The most successful elements of the Thai élite are those who have most successfully traded the appropriate currencies at key political junctures. By examining the transformations and adaptations of the three forms of power during the recent decades, the dynamics of social and political change in Thailand are assessed and reviewed.

Security

Defining security in the Thai context is highly contentious. Despite the powerful role played by the military in the Thai political order since 1932, security (as conventionally understood) has never been the central task of the military in Thailand. The military is first and foremost an armed bureaucracy, which does not fight wars. Unlike other powerful militaries in the region (such as those of Myanmar, Indonesia, or South Korea), it has not fought an independence struggle or defended national sovereignty. As one commentator wrote in 1982: "The army showed that it remains politicized, factionalized, and is of doubtful value as a military force."[2] Ben Anderson memorably described the Thai military as "a cluster of self-absorbed, status conscious, privileged bureaucratic factions".[3] The Thai military has often appeared to shun potentially dangerous situations. Instead, military officers have preferred to devote their energies to the more interesting and satisfying professions of business and politics. Their core businesses have been smuggling, logging, and profiting from the country's natural resources. In politics, they have consistently claimed for themselves high political office (many of Thailand's prime ministers have had a military background), and a share in the running of the country. The pursuit of security, as understood from the perspective of the Thai military, has sometimes amounted to finding strategies to avoid having to fight anyone.

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There is no doubt that there were some areas of considerable professionalism within the Thai military during the Indochina conflict. This was especially the case in technical fields such as artillery, where Thai forces benefited from U.S. technology and training. By the 1980s, the Thai military had developed much more effective methods of combating insurgencies than previously. Yet, the most successful anti-communist strategy of the Thai military was its amnesty policy for communist insurgents, which yielded dramatic results in the early 1980s. Rather than fight communism in the jungles, the military decided to wait for the radicals to emerge from the jungle of their own accord. Since many of the so-called communist rebels were never members of the Beijing-backed Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), but actually middle-class students from Bangkok with little appetite for a lifetime of guerrilla warfare, the amnesty strategy proved highly successful. In any case, the Sino-Vietnamese split, which resulted from the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1979, led China to cut off aid to the CPT, resulting directly in the decline of the insurgency.

Thus, the idea of "security" in the Thai context must be understood partly as a rhetorical device, a mantra recited ritualistically by generations of Thai military officers in a questionable attempt to justify their over-sized organization and comfortable sinecures. There can be few other militaries in the world where promotion to general is so common. Promotion to major-general is semi-automatic for graduates of the Chulachomklao Military Academy who do not seriously blot their copy books (and usual even for those who do, as in the case of several officers disgraced in the 1 April 1981 coup attempt, but later restored to their former rank). The Thai military has a very large number of senior officers, many of whom have almost literally nothing to do.[4]

The Thai military used various strategies in order to build up its power and influence. First, the military presented itself as a central player in creating the modern Thai state, thanks to its role in the ending of the absolute monarchy in 1932. This piece of historiography was central to the claim of the armed forces that they were dedicated to the true interests of the people. Secondly, during the Cold War the military represented itself as the central institution involved in combating the communist threat, both externally (primarily from Indochina), and from domestic sources. The military did not hesitate to invoke the Vietnamese communist bogeyman to justify its own demands. Thirdly, the military forged a powerful alliance with the United States during the Vietnam era, and was the beneficiary of substantial American aid and training. These resources helped to bolster the prestige of the armed forces, and also enabled senior military officers to build up their own political and economic power bases. Fourthly, the military did not

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hesitate to threaten, attempt, or stage *coups d'état* on the basis of supposed national interests. All these sources of military influence rest on dubious premises. It can be argued that the Thai military had considerable vested interests in helping to end the absolute monarchy, that the army was not a particularly effective force against communist threats, that the armed forces provided little return for the expensive American aid programmes lavished upon them, and that the real explanations for military coups were invariably challenges to military power and privilege, rather than genuine threats to national security.[5]

As Muthiah Alagappa has noted:

> [Since 1932] successive military regimes have used the label of national security to justify the usurpation of political power and their subsequent political actions... Of significance in this connection is the recent attempt to institutionalize the dominant role of the military in Thai politics under the mantle of national security. The military is now not only assigned the traditional role of national defense but is also assigned the custodial role of the traditional institutions, and a leading role in defining and building a democratic framework suitable to Thailand. The lack of consensus over the exercise of state authority makes it exceedingly difficult to differentiate normal political intercourse from activities that may be considered as threats to national security.[6]

In other words, the concept of national security was manipulated as a means of securing the privileged political standing of the military, and to justify an extension of the military role into a wide range of political arenas. Alagappa also observes that the Cambodian conflict during the 1980s was an extremely convenient one for the Thai military, a diversionary conflict which tied up potential aggressors, and offered lucrative opportunities for smuggling and arms-dealing. Whilst the levels of communist insurgency in Thailand were doubtless overstated for the purpose of legitimating high levels of military expenditure, the effective end of such insurgency by the early 1980s posed a new set of problems for the military. The old problem of how not to fight the insurgents was replaced by the new problem of how not to fight them any longer.

The new position was explored in two important papers: a "Master Plan for Regional Cooperation or the Creation of a New Equilibrium" produced by the National Security Council in 1993, and a White Paper by the Defence Ministry entitled *The Defence of Thailand 1994*.[7] The "Master Plan" argued that Thailand needed to become a regional hub for Indochina, Myanmar, southern China, and ASEAN; and acknowledged that this goal could only be achieved by promoting better political linkages across the region. In other words, cultural and attitudinal

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changes were crucial to the safeguarding of national security. By contrast, the Defence White Paper of 1994 — while paying lip service to the importance of values such as ethics, dedication, loyalty and responsibility — placed greater emphasis on conventional unilateral military preparedness:

> During the Cold War, Thailand was in the middle of the conflicts between the communist countries and the free world. After the communists took over Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the fighting in those countries and the infiltration by the Communist Party of Thailand, made it seem that Thailand was in a state of war. It was therefore necessary to pour all available national resources to safeguard the independence and sovereignty of the nation.
>
> After the end of the Cold War, the political situation changed rapidly. Confrontation between superpowers with different ideologies ended, and economic competition took its place. The contest for markets and resources could, however, lead to the use of force in the future. The Armed Forces therefore must change its focus and concentrate more on protecting national economic interests, develop weapons systems and technology to improve capability, and to produce skilled personnel to operate these weapons.[8]

The lack of logic was stunning: the end of the Cold War meant a need for improved military capabilities, and hence for increased high-tech resources by the military. The confusion seen here between promoting military professionalism and buying expensive toys was deliberately fostered and sustained by the military lobby. Time after time, it was argued that buying better equipment would lead to a more professional military.[9] In fact, there is substantial evidence for the opposite view: the heavy arms buying of the late 1980s was linked to the pursuit of lucrative arms commissions by senior commanders, and coincided with the politicization of the military, which culminated in the 23 February 1991 *coup d'état*.

The 1994 White Paper reflected attempts by the military to rehabilitate itself with the Thai public after the bloody events of May 1992, when about 100 people were killed (or went permanently "missing") following a decision by army commanders to open fire on hundreds of thousands of peaceful demonstrators protesting against the unelected prime minister, 1991 coup leader General Suchinda Kraprayoon.[10] As in October 1973 and October 1976, Thai security forces demonstrated that they were entirely capable of shooting to kill — as long as the targets were unarmed Thai citizens.

Chai-Anan Samudavanija has argued that the military has been increasingly isolated since May 1992, as the private sector sought to undermine its privileges, the public became less tolerant of its

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politicking, and the international community became more critical of its corrupt relations with the Khmer Rouge and the Myanmar regime.[11] He predicted that the military would be increasingly "bypassed" as a result of globalization and the erosion of state capacity. Whereas in 1991, the coup group known as the National Peace Keeping Council commanded broad-based support in its seizure of power from the elected Chatichai Choonhavan government, May 1992 saw the military discredited as an effective political force. At the same time, as John Girling has noted: "The military is no longer able to impose its own image on Thai society, but it is still a wild card. Even if the top personnel have been displaced, its national security ideology has hardly been affected."[12] There seems every reason to assume that military leaders would welcome the opportunity to restore some of their declining power and influence. However, such a restoration would now be difficult to achieve by the traditional method of a *coup d'état*, and the tighter fiscal climate produced by the post-July 1997 monetary crisis has made high-prestige arms purchases much more problematic than before. Military thinking may remain essentially the same; but the most immediate question is how best to promote that thinking in a more pluralistic political order. Military officers have been obliged to seek alternative routes to power, making use of the discourses of development and participation rather than the largely obsolete discourse of security. The old threats do not work any more, but the military has not yet lost its appetite for political power. Certainly, many elements in the military were very effective in resisting relatively modest programmes of defence sector reform advocated by the 1997-2001 Chuan Leekpai government.[13] A decade after May 1992, no civilian government has yet gained sufficient leverage substantively to challenge the core of military privilege: the culture of over-promotion, and the remarkable proliferation of generals. Chaiwat Satha-Anand has ingeniously argued that Thai strategic culture reflects "tensions between different layers of culture", giving rise to "the elastic cultural space necessary for radical policy adaptability".[14] Alternatively, it might well be suggested that discourses of security in the Thai context are essentially incoherent, serving the immediate interests of the military and defence élite.

Development

The idea of "development" in the Thai context gained currency following a 1959 World Bank report which advocated a systematic, state-led programme of economic development using a central agency (the National Economic and Social Development Board) and a series of

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national development plans. The first such plan took effect in 1961. Ironically, this use of Soviet-style central state planning coincided with a generous U.S. aid programme, designed to make Thailand a bulwark against the much-feared tide of Indochinese communism. One core policy of the planning agencies was to create regional hub cities outside Bangkok, such as Khon Kaen in the Northeast. Infrastructural improvements supported by the U.S. Government performed several functions: they provided the basis for a rapid increase in industrialization and economic development; they were strategically important in making Thailand an effective American base to resist Indochinese communism; they helped the central Thai state to penetrate and control more effectively "peripheral" regions of suspect loyalty (especially the northeast and Muslim parts of the south) and they offered sections of the Thai élite, especially military commanders working in close collaboration with mainly Sino-Thai businessmen, the opportunity to enrich themselves through lucrative construction contracts and commissions. "Development" in the Thai context was far from a neutral and positive term; it was a synonym for enhancing state power, promoting anti-communism, and strengthening the élite. As Demaine argues, "development" was an ideological construct in the Thai context: to challenge the inexorable logic of economic development was practically an act of subversion.[15] The effects of rapid growth were dramatic, and the impact on Thailand's resources often devastating: whereas in 1961, 51 per cent of Thailand was covered by forest, by 1988 only 19 per cent of the country was forested. In 1960, there were 2,118 km of provincial roads in Northeast Thailand; by 1988, the figure had increased more than tenfold, to 27,595 km.[16] "Development" activities, such as deforestation and highway construction, often had a "security" dimension: removing trees meant removing cover for insurgents, and destroying traditional livelihoods for minority groups, thus facilitating the expansion of central state power and control. For the military, such projects brought personal financial gains, whilst making the task of counter-insurgency easier. One important consequence of "development" was the way in which it helped to create and strengthen a burgeoning class of Sino-Thai entrepreneurs, who worked hand-in-hand with bureaucrats and military officers. Many of these entrepreneurs had arrived in Siam in the 1920s, 1930s, or 1940s with virtually nothing. During the 1960s and 1970s, their banks, construction companies, and trading houses became highly successful enterprises.[17]

By the 1980s, the character of Thai economic development had changed substantially. No longer driven by Cold War imperatives or backed by large-scale American aid, the development process was increasingly dominated by the private sector. Sino-Thai companies

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invested heavily in manufacturing, often embarking upon joint ventures with Western, Japanese, or Korean partners. The service sector also blossomed, especially following the hugely successful "Visit Thailand Year" of 1987, which spawned numerous hotel projects. Thailand enjoyed a real estate boom during the late 1980s and early 1990s, and double-digit growth for three consecutive years made the country one of the world's fastest-growing economies.[18] Whereas in the 1960s, the business class had been the subordinate partner of military and political élites, the reverse was true by the 1990s. Political élites were increasingly dependent upon backing from the business sector, as parliamentary politics had become more important. Whereas in the past, backing from the military was sufficient for one to become prime minister, by the late 1980s controlling Members of Parliament (MPs) had become the main route to political power, and to ministerial and prime ministerial office.

A pervasive feature of Thai development was its unevenness, its unfairness, its lack of guiding principles of social equity, and its persistent failure to redistribute the gains of high growth to more deprived regions of the country.[19] There were many notable achievements for Thai development, including near-universal primary schooling, good levels of basic health care, and a model family planning programme. Yet, high growth rates produced an ugly picture of private affluence coupled with public squalor, as an avaricious business class was allowed to squander its new-found wealth through a series of short-sighted and bickering governments which lacked a coherent vision of the need for high-quality public services. In particular, the failure to invest heavily in secondary and technical education during the boom period of 1985-95 left Thailand's work-force ill-equipped to compete with neighbouring countries. As wage levels rose, and Thailand lost its comparative advantage in terms of labour costs, the country lacked the skills base to upgrade its work-force, and move to a more technologically advanced economy. As Girling notes, Thailand's school enrolment figures were 25 years behind those of Taiwan, and far worse than those of less "successful" neighbouring economies, such as Indonesia and the Philippines.[20] By the year 2000, 70 per cent of Thailand's work-force had received only primary education.[21] This failure resulted directly from the lack of political will, and reflected the short-sightedness of Thailand's political, bureaucratic and business élites, whose failure to plan and to invest for the future was one cause of the severe economic downturn which began in 1997. Nevertheless, the claim that they were successfully promoting the rapid development of the country was central to the legitimating rhetoric of those élites, especially from the mid-1980s to 1997.

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Political Accommodation, or Political Participation?

The military-bureaucratic élite in Thailand has traditionally held participatory politics in contempt. Elected politicians have been viewed as dangerous upstarts who might upset the apple-cart of hierarchies. One early element in this view was a fear that the Chinese could empower themselves politically and financially by corrupting the electoral process. Thai military officers and bureaucrats claimed that they (by implicit contrast) were pure in their intentions towards the country, and in close touch with the needs and wishes of the people. The Thai élite, supported by sympathetic foreign scholars, sought to present a picture of the mass of the country's people as essentially apolitical, and given to avoiding conflict at all costs. The intellectual stance of American scholarship during the 1950s and 1960s (the heyday of modernization theory) was explicitly laid out in an admirably honest article by Herbert Phillips. Phillips argued that American scholarship on Thailand during this period was a "scholarship of admiration for Thai history, culture, and society".[22] He went on to explain that:

> [I]t is precisely because Thailand has so long represented a situation of simultaneous adaptation and maintenance that American scholars have with comfort, and I think with some measure of success, explained Thailand primarily in terms of an equilibrium, rather than conflict, model of human affairs.[23]

These words, it should be recalled, were first published in 1973, the year of 14 October, when a student-led popular uprising forced the country's military dictators into exile; the year also saw the beginning of the most turbulent and conflictual period of Thailand's modern political history.

The popular political movements of the 1973-76 period put paid to simplistic notions that the Thai élite had an inherently legitimate right to govern. After the shock of 1973, when a military dictatorship collapsed in the face of popular defiance, élite actors were forced to come to terms with the reality of bottom-up pressures, and the need to accommodate demands for participation. Despite the superficially successful repression of student protests in October 1976, and the brief return to an earlier style of crude authoritarianism, the 1976-77 Thanin regime never succeeded in gaining legitimacy, and was toppled by a military coup after only a year. The military had recognized that in order to retain a significant political role, they had to tolerate a far greater degree of pluralism than they had previously been willing to countenance. Surachart Bamrungsuk argues that the military itself initiated a "transition to transaction", giving the green light to an opening up of new terrains of political space.[24] A counter-argument is

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that the military did not jump willingly to such a position, but was pushed there by the logic of economic, social, and political changes which were beyond its understanding, let alone its control. The second argument seems much more persuasive, since the first argument would credit the Thai military with an unusually high degree of critical self-awareness. A third possibility is that a fractured military was split on the issue: in the late 1970s and early 1980s, factionalism was extremely rife in the Thai armed forces.

The term "political accommodation" implies that state élites had the upper hand in deciding how much political space would be allowed; in the Thai context, however, this is a highly questionable assumption, given the vigour of popular demands for political participation. Nevertheless, compared to other similar militaries, the Thai military has long had a high degree of influence on civilian politics (with generals assuming Cabinet posts and even forming parties), and a high degree of business entanglements, which have frequently required them to achieve a *modus vivendi* with political leaders.

Whichever interpretation one prefers, the subsequent political trend has involved increasing popular participation in the political process, the growing importance of elections and parties, and the rise of "professional" politicians. For the first time, politics could offer a vocation, rather than simply a reward for bureaucratic or military services rendered. The changing character of Thai politics during the 1980s and early 1990s was, in certain respects, dynamic and refreshing. As non-state actors gained a growing voice in the land, environmental issues provided a focus for critical perspectives on the development process, non-governmental organizations expanded their activities, the media made use of its relative freedom of expression, an energetic elected local government took control of Bangkok, and new political parties and social movements blossomed.

Yet there was a darker side to this flowering of political participation in Thailand. The electoral process was far from open, especially in the provinces. Some 90 per cent of Thai MPs were elected outside Bangkok, where electoral outcomes were often determined by vote-buying, fraud, and the corruption of officials.[25] Electoral fraud took on numerous different forms, including voter impersonation and count-rigging. Whilst traditional élites "accommodated" other actors by allowing them to participate in electoral politics, the scope for free and fair electoral contestation was very limited. There is evidence that the distortion and manipulation of the electoral process, which had long existed, grew increasingly rampant during the 1980s and 1990s. As control of parliamentary seats came to translate directly into control of Cabinet posts, and thereby directly into control of lucrative government

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contracts and crucial regulatory decisions, so the value of electoral outcomes increased. Rival faction bosses, parties, and power-brokers were able to raise huge cash advances from prospective beneficiaries in order to secure given electoral outcomes. As a play on words in Thai illustrates, "politics" (*kanmuang*) became a matter of "eating the country" (*kinmuang*).[26]

For this reason, the increased pluralism of Thai politics did not necessarily amount to a process of democratization or political liberalization.[27] Rather, it illustrated shifts in the character of élite governance in Thailand, as a military-bureaucratic élite was displaced by a new élite with close ties to the business community. The economic growth originally associated with military dominance (justified on "security" grounds), had now developed a momentum of its own. Business actors who had started out as the subordinate partners of generals and senior civilian officials, were now gaining the upper hand. Using the electoral process as a tool, they were gaining access to ministerial positions through their bankrolling of election campaigns, parties, and factions. This was not so much a case of economic development broadening popular political participation as a new rotation of political élites, facilitated by the highly inequitable proceeds of uneven economic growth (a process famously described by one writer in the 1970s as "modernization without development").[28] The Thai economy was growing rapidly, but this economic growth was not shaped by any principles of equitable distribution. Similarly, the scope for political power and influence was increasing, but this "political growth" was entirely ungoverned by notions of political equality.[29]

In other words, "security", "development", and "political accommodation" (to a large extent, euphemisms for "state violence", "economic growth", and "electoral mobilization") could be seen as three alternative forms of power and influence held by élite actors in Thailand during the 1980s and 1990s. Competing élites sought to trade different forms of power and influence, exchanging the forms they held for those forms which they believed would best enhance their standing. The military traded their security power for development power (by engaging in smuggling, logging, and other criminal activities), which they used in turn to influence the political process (in the form of votes for political parties they owned or controlled). Business people used their development influence to buy security (protection from the military and from organized criminals), and also to buy participation, in the form of influence over Cabinet appointments and decisions. Politicians traded their capacity to mobilize participation for power over the development process, thereby enriching themselves, and strengthening their political bases. They also bought security to buy-off

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coup threats, and to pacify the military. There was an increasing interpenetration of élites. While the rise of the business sector did increase the size of the middle class — and thereby contribute to the strengthening of civil society — the middle class generally acted primarily from economic self-interest rather than political principle, as seen in the widespread middle class support for the 23 February 1991 military coup.

Yet in the wake of the events of May 1992, the rhetoric of security was severely undermined. Given the damage that had been done to the reputation and credibility of the military during the troubled 1991-92 period, politicians and business people began to feel much less need for the "security" offered by the military. Indeed, too close an alliance with the military could actually undermine the security of a government. Increasingly, the key relationship was that between business and politics, rather than between the military and politics or the military and business.

Political Adaptation: The Case of Chavalit Yongchaiyudh

One of the clearest ways in which the changing significance of security, development and participation in the Thai context can be examined is to study the career of General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh. Chavalit, a career army officer from the Signals Corps, made his reputation in the military by successfully associating himself with the policies of political offensives against the Communist Party of Thailand, and the amnesty for defectors. To what extent was Chavalit really responsible for these policies is a matter of some debate. One of his key influences was Prasert Sapsunthorn, a former CPT ideologue, who served as an adviser to the "Democratic Soldiers" clique (of which Chavalit was a leading member) and later as a political adviser to the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC).[30] Aware of the internal conflicts of the CPT (and of the adverse effects of aggressive counter-insurgency methods, such as destroying "red" villages), Prasert proposed a "political" solution to the communist problem. When the CPT threat did indeed decline in the early and mid-1980s, Chavalit succeeded in taking much of the credit for something which had actually been initiated by Prime Minister Kriangsak Chomanan in the late 1970s. Chavalit was subsequently promoted to Army Commander-in-Chief in 1986, and later simultaneously held the technically senior but actually more symbolic post of Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

Yet despite being promoted to these top positions by arch-royalist General Prem Tinsulanonda (who was then Prime Minister), Chavalit was opposed by former Prime Minister and elder statesman Kukrit

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Pramoj. Kukrit accused Chavalit of harbouring leftist leanings, and of favouring an elected premiership which would undermine the standing of the monarchy. Though in some respects a thorn in Chavalit's side during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Kukrit helped Chavalit to build up a faintly "radical" image, as someone sympathetic to "socialistic" ideas, and to the aspirations of minority groups. One of Chavalit's favourite *modus operandi* was to build links with trade unions and protest groups. During his tenure as Army chief, he was often called in to resolve mysterious industrial and other disputes that some suspected he had instigated himself. Chavalit sought to portray himself as a supporter of the underdog. This is what Girling has described as the military's "Chavalit option": "influencing or manipulating politics by populist (anti-capitalist, anti-politicking) proclamations, and by supporting rural and urban mass organizations as counterweights".[31] Chavalit successfully marketed this image in the Muslim-dominated border provinces of the south, where he established a military-sponsored programme called "New Hope", and in the Northeast, where he set up a programme known as "Green Isan", which was supposed to promote agricultural and economic rejuvenation in this deprived region. In both cases, Chavalit used substantial chunks of the military budget, channelling the funds through a network of local leaders (village headmen and others) whom he identified by using the ISOC's anti-communist database. In other words, he sought to turn a security network into a development network. At the same time, his real goal was abundantly clear: to mobilize this network for the purposes of winning popular political support. In 1990, he took early retirement from the military, and after a brief and disastrous spell as an unelected Deputy Prime Minister in Chatichai Choonhavan's Cabinet, he set up his own political party, New Aspiration. This party declared an explicit goal of attracting a million members, and sought to establish an elaborate nationwide structure to organize and mobilize this mass of people.

New Aspiration sought to convert the "development" networks of "Green Isan" and other programmes into a mobilizing network for the party. Sensing the shift away from military dominance of the political order and towards greater participation, Chavalit had sought to reinvent himself into a party politician. This kind of make-over was practised by a number of other politicians, including his predecessor as army commander General Arthit Kamlang-ek (who formed his own party after being expelled from the military by Prem, and eventually became Deputy Prime Minister) and former Young Turk leader Major-General Chamlong Srimuang (who retired from the military at 50 to stand successfully for election as Governor of Bangkok in 1985, later forming

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his own political party and rising to the post of Deputy Prime Minister). Chavalit's political ascendancy was interrupted by the 1991 coup (which can be seen partly as a plot by his formerly loyal Class 5 subordinates to block him from gaining the premiership). The limits of the original Chavalit option were clearly illustrated by the wholesale corruption of the March 1992 electoral process. In order to realize his political ambitions, Chavalit was obliged to adopt all the worst features of party politics which he purported to challenge.[32] By transforming the New Aspiration Party into a pure "rural machine" party dedicated to large-scale vote-buying, Chavalit was eventually able to become Prime Minister in November 1996. During his premiership he continued to make populist overtures to farmers' groups and other organizations.[33] Yet Chavalit had long sold out his party to the big corporations which provided New Aspiration with most of its financial backing.

The November 1997 events referred to at the beginning of this article illustrate that whereas Chavalit's grasp of reality had become more tenuous (ironically, he built his military career and subsequent transition to civilian politics on his insistence that he would never permit a coup to take place on his watch), the military commanders now understood better than the Prime Minister that a crackdown under the watchful gaze of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and international investors would be very costly. Chavalit had been able to use his military background to build up sufficient resources eventually to bankroll his premiership. However, like General Suchinda in 1992, Chavalit discovered the hard way that retaining power in Thailand was rather more difficult than gaining power.

Chavalit's career illustrates well that in Thailand security, development, and participation have been alternative legitimating discourses, manipulated by the political élites in their quest to gain and then to retain power. Just as Chavalit had a questionable reputation on security matters, and just as his much-vaunted "Green Isan" programme had no substantial positive development impact, so his New Aspiration Party created a sham of "participation" which delivered little to its supporters. Chavalit subsequently became the first former Thai Prime Minister to accept a formal post under one of his successors, serving as Defence Minister in the administration of Thaksin Shinawatra from February 2001.

Conclusion

The usage and prioritization of loaded and highly ambiguous terms such as "development" and "security" gradually changed in Thailand. These changes reflected shifts in the balance of élite power, as the

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military was forced to cede the high ground to elected politicians working in alliance with business people. One effect was to modify the way in which public policy has been distorted by interest groups, increasing the degree to which distortions reflect rapidly-changing alliances between short-lived ministers and their questionable business associates. The results have been clearly illustrated by numerous cases: an obvious one was the chaotic public transport situation in Bangkok, where various competing infrastructure projects had been initiated by rival agencies, parties and companies, each consortium vying to advance its own project at the expense of others, and resulting in both figurative and literal gridlock.

In terms of politics, the subordination of wider political participation to élite interests resulted in widespread distrust of the political process, and strong demands for electoral and other reforms.[34] These demands culminated in (but were by no means fully assuaged by) the promulgation of a new constitution in November 1997.[35] The "people's constitution" of 1997 effectively marked the ascendancy of political participation as the dominant currency in discourses of Thai power. No government could now assert its legitimacy without reference to popular participation. Yet, without substantial decentralization of the bureaucratic order, and the creation of more effective local government structures (such as might be symbolized by the popular election of all provincial governors), it seems unlikely that popular dissatisfaction with representative politics will decline. At various junctures, such as in May 1992, opposition groups have sought to circumvent the parliamentary process by resorting to rally politics and mass demonstrations; the "rally mode" of politics is always available in Thailand when conventional political processes fail to deliver. Social groups and political forces outside the ruling élite typically engage in a dual process of selectively engaging and collaborating with the orthodox political system, and campaigning outside that system. The Thai élite can no longer justify limits on political participation on the basis of national security criteria. Nor can the benefits of economic development be monopolized by a minority of the country's population without a substantial backlash. The economic crisis of 1997 had created a new imperative for the more equitable distribution of both wealth and power in contemporary Thailand; yet the landslide election of Thaksin Shinawatra — one of Thailand's richest men — to the premiership in January 2001 suggests that old inequalities and contradictions continue to persist.

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NOTES

1. For details of this extraordinary but largely forgotten development, see "PM pulled back from the brink", *Bangkok Post* (*BP*), 22 October 1997; and Michael Vatikiotis, "Democracy First", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 November 1997.
2. Larry A. Niksch, "Thailand in 1981: The Prem Government Feels the Heat", *Asian Survey* 22, no. 2 (February 1982): 191.
3. Benedict Anderson, "Studies of the Thai State: The State of Thai Studies", in *The Study of Thailand: Analyses of Knowledge, Approaches and Prospects in Anthropology, Art History, Economics, History, and Political Science*, edited by Eliezer B. Ayal, Southeast Asia Series, no. 54 (Athens, OH.: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1978), p. 205.
4. In 1998 there were an estimated 1,300 to 1,400 generals in the Thai Army, about half of them in "inactive" posts (*BP*, 5 March 1998). Chamlong Srimuang, as a colonel attached to the military's Supreme Command from 1981–85, spent most of his time driving around the country, preaching Buddhist sermons in the manner of a wandering monk. Playing golf is a more common way of filling in time.
5. For arguments along these lines, see Duncan McCargo, *Chamlong Srimuang and the New Thai Politics* (London: Hurst 1997), pp. 19–66.
6. Muthiah Alagappa, *The National Security of Developing States: Lessons from Thailand* (Dover MA: Auburn House Publishing, 1987), p. 71.
7. For a detailed discussion of these two documents, see Chaiwat Satha-Anand, "Thailand: The Layers of a Strategic Culture", in *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region*, edited by Ken Booth and Russell Trood (Basingstoke: Macmillan 1999), pp. 148–53.
8. *The Defence of Thailand 1994* (Bangkok: Ministry of Defence, 1994), pp. 25–26.
9. For one of the most explicit arguments to this effect, see Suchit Bunbongkarn, "The Thai Military in the 1990s: A Declining Political Force?" in *The Military in Politics: Southeast Asian Experiences*, edited by Wolfgang S. Heinz, Werner Pfennig and Victor T. King (Hull: University of Hull, Centre for South-East Asian Studies, 1990), pp. 106–22.
10. See William A. Callahan, *Imagining Democracy: Reading "The Events of May" in Thailand* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998).
11. Chai-Anan Samudavanija, "Old Soldiers Never Die, They are Just Bypassed: The Military, Bureaucracy, and Globalisation", in *Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation*, edited by Kevin Hewison (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 42–57.
12. John Girling, *Interpreting Development: Capitalism, Democracy and the Rise of the Middle Class in Thailand* (Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1996), p. 22.
13. For information on some of these proposals, and the reactions they elicited, see *BP*, 24 July 1998; 28 July 1998; 10 October 1998; and 16 March 1999. For an excellent discussion and analysis, see James Ockey, "Thailand: The Struggle to Redefine Civil-Military Relations", in *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia*, edited by Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2001), pp. 187–208.
14. Chaiwat, op. cit., p. 161.
15. See Harvey Demaine, "Kanpatthana: Thai Views of Development", in *Context, Meaning and Power in Southeast Asia*, edited by Mark Hobart and Robert H. Taylor (Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1986), pp. 93-114.
16. Figures from Kamala Tiyavanich, *Forest Recollections: Wandering Monks in Twentieth-Century Thailand* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), p. 244.

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19. For extensive discussion of these issues, see numerous excellent chapters in *Uneven Development in Thailand*, edited by Michael G. Parnwell (Aldershot: Avebury 1996).
20. Girling, *Interpreting Development*, p. 23.
21. Pasuk Phongpaichit, "Thailand", in *Southeast Asia's Misunderstood Miracle: Industrial Policy and Economic Development in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia*, edited by Jomo K.S. et al (Boulder: Westview 1997), p. 83.
22. Herbert Phillips, "Some Premises of American Scholarship on Thailand", in *Modern Thai Politics: From Village to Nation*, edited by Clark Neher (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Schenkman, 1979), p. 449.
23. Ibid., p. 451.
24. Surachart Bamrungsuk, "The Military-initiated Transition in Thailand: Causes, Conditions and Costs" (Statement delivered to the academic meeting on "Arsom Khamkid", Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, 29 July 1991).
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27. See Duncan McCargo, "Problematising Democratisation: The Thai Case", Working Paper No. 61, Development Research Series (Aalborg, Denmark: DIR, Aalborg University, December 1997).
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31. Girling, *Interpreting Development*, p. 30.
32. On New Aspiration, see Duncan McCargo, "Political parties: Real, authentic and actual Thai parties", in *Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation*, edited by Kevin Hewison (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 127-31.
33. For detailed examples, see Somchai Phatharathananunth, "Civil Society in Northeast Thailand: The Struggle of the Small Scale Farmers' Assembly of Isan" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 2001), especially chapters 5 and 6.
34. Some of the most influential contributions to this debate came from Dr Prawase Wasi and the Democratic Development Committee. See Khana Kamakan Pattana Prachathipatai [Democratic Development Committee], *Khoseno Kropkhwamkhit nai Kanpathirup Kanmuang Thai* [Conceptual Framework for Reforming Thai Politics] (Bangkok: Thailand Research Fund, April 1995); and Prawase Wasi, *Pathirup Thang Kanmuang: Thang Ok Khong Prathet Thai* [Political Reform: The Way Out for Thailand] (Bangkok: Mo Chao Ban, 1995).

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35. For discussions, see Duncan McCargo, "Alternative Meanings of Political Reform in Contemporary Thailand", *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, no. 13 (1998): 5-30; and *Reforming Thai Politics*, edited by Duncan McCargo (Copenhagen: NIAS, forthcoming).

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Challenges for Japanese Diplomacy After the End of the Cold War

FUMITAKA FURUOKA

In the post-Cold War era when Western countries began to promote "universal values" and Asian countries proclaimed "Asian values", Japan chose the Asia-Pacific region as a main theatre for its diplomacy. In this article, Japan's efforts to strengthen diplomatic relations with Asia are seen as an attempt to establish a new in-group (uchi) *with other Asian countries. Before World War II, Japan already made an attempt to expand its* uchi *by absorbing East Asian countries by force and brought on a self-destructive war with the West. Japan should learn from its previous mistakes to establish balanced diplomatic relations with Asia that would contribute to the prosperity of, and stability in, both Western and Asian countries.*

Introduction

Two prominent and interrelated traits of Japanese foreign policy during the Cold War were close relations with Western democracies and a minimalist approach. Japan did not need to take bold initiatives on the international stage when it relied on the West. Thus, Japan willingly went along with the rules set by other countries because it wanted to concentrate on its own economic development and refrained from taking on extra tasks.

However, global political changes in the 1990s gave Japan an impetus to transform its old-fashioned diplomatic style into a more independent and progressive way to conduct foreign policy. In 1991, the vice-minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and a leading proponent of diplomatic activism, Takakazu Kuriyama,

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asserted that passive diplomacy, that took a given international order for granted, was no longer relevant. As he put it, "Japan must take an active role in the reconstruction of the world order".[1] Kuriyama called for a sharing of responsibilities for global peace and prosperity among the United States, Western Europe, and Japan in an arrangement that he termed "global partnership". More importantly, Kuriyama defined the Asia-Pacific region as "the main theatre of Japan's foreign policy" in the post-Cold War period, and "global partnership" meant a leadership role for Japan in East Asia.[2]

An important reason why Japan is set to play an active role in East Asia is that Japan sees itself as part of Asia and the Japanese consider themselves Asian. As Ishizuka put it: "Despite the strong political and economic ties with the West, Japanese people are inclined to identify themselves with Asia. This is only natural."[3]

A top officer in the MOFA, Toru Bessho, has pointed out that for a long time Japan refrained from taking initiatives in Asia. However, in the 1990s, the search for an identity and diplomatic role prodded Japan to reassess its relations with the rest of Asia. As a result, Bessho claims that in the future, Japan may be more willing to come up with new initiatives for the region.[4] In a similar vein, Lincoln has argued that in the 1990s, the Japanese Government began to consider the possibility of Japan assuming a leadership role in Asia. He has noted: "The end of the Cold War opened the way for Japan to pursue an independent foreign policy (using foreign aid as a key element) focused primarily on Asia."[5]

If Japan intends to play a more significant role in Asia, it is important for Japan to find a balance in its diplomatic relations with Western and Asian countries. On the one hand, Western democracies abide by "universal values", such as human rights, democracy, freedom, and the market economy, and consider those as ideals to be shared by every country. As Jack Donnelly has argued, in the new international society, all members must share common values, and human rights emerge as a "standard of civilisation".[6] On the other hand, some Asian leaders eschew "universal values" and insist that there exists another set of values — "Asian values". These leaders claim that Asia has its own history, culture, and traditions, and therefore Western concepts of human rights and democracy cannot be applied to Asia.

The "Asian values" argument could become a contentious issue of Japanese diplomacy. This is partly because the Japanese Government has traditionally shown solidarity with the West and often criticized other Asian countries' policies. Asian countries, in their turn, might begin to consider Japan a betrayer of Asian interests. Thus, the Japanese Government once came under attack from other Asian countries for

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"being too Western in its approach" when at the Asian Regional Conference on Human Rights in Bangkok in 1993 Japan insisted on the need to promote human rights.[7] Asian governments suggested that the issue should be considered in the context of a dynamic and evolving process of international norm-setting, bearing in mind the significance of national and regional particularities, and various historical, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

Against this backdrop, this article examines how well Japanese diplomacy can deal with contentious issues and face challenges that the post-Cold War world poses. Recently, the Japanese Government began to pay more attention to human rights issues and to regard the promotion of human rights and democracy as an important agenda for the international community. However, dealing with human rights issues in Asia might be problematic for a Japanese Government that is anxious not to put at risk good relations with its Asian neighbours. Japan's position on the issue of human rights in Asia became more difficult after some Asian governments began to criticize Western human rights diplomacy and proclaimed "Asian values" as their standard for guiding their societies. In this connection, a few questions arise. Among them are: what is Japan's stance on "Asian values"? Will the Japanese Government recognize the validity of "Asian values", or will it conform to the "universal values" espoused by the West? Moreover, can lessons from the country's recent history help Japan to find its place in international diplomacy?

The *Uchi-Soto* Dimension and Japanese Diplomacy

To analyse characteristics and trends in Japanese diplomacy, a key Japanese socio-psychological concept of *uchi* and *soto* is employed here. This concept was effectively used by Takeshi Ishida in his analysis of Japanese society in 1984. The dimensions of *uchi* and *soto* might be effective in discussing not only Japanese domestic societal relations, but also international relations. According to Ishida, "*uchi*" means "in" or an "in-group" and "*soto*" means "out" or an "out-group".[8] In the Japanese psyche, there is a sharp demarcation between "we" and "they". Thus, while the Japanese have a strong sense of attachment and loyalty to their in-group, they feel some antagonism towards perceived outsiders. According to Ishida, an in-group (*uchi*) is composed of those who share the feeling of "we" and among whom the behaviour associated with dependency (*amae*) is allowed. At the same time, confrontational measures are taken against an out-group (*soto*), and no concessions are made to it. Distinguishing between an in-group and out-group is not peculiar to Japan. However, the unique Japanese

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trait is that "the scope of the in-group depends on the situation: thus, the area considered to be an in-group on different occasions tends to form concentric circles".[9]

In its diplomatic relations, the Japanese Government has shown a strong loyalty to the *uchi*, a group of countries that share similar values and ideals with Japan. At the same time, countries that are not members of Japan's *uchi* are always considered to be outsiders, though Japan may show friendly gestures towards them. Among such gestures may be cultural exchanges or the sending and receiving of delegations for conferences and meetings.

Japanese Diplomacy during the Cold War

During the Cold War, international politics was defined by the confrontation between the Western democracies and the communist countries. There were three actors on the world stage: the Western democracies, the communist countries, and the others.

Japan identified itself as a member of the Western camp, or in-group (*uchi*), and considered other groups and their members to be outsiders (*soto*). Feeling safe under U.S. military protection, Japan did not need to worry about security matters. This special rapport between the United States and Japan can be considered to be a dependency relationship (*amae*) within the *uchi*. At the same time, the Japanese Government considered security arrangements with the leader of the in-group, the United States, as a favour (*on*) that should be repaid by showing loyalty and solidarity, as well as sharing responsibilities, by providing foreign aid to the less developed countries (LDCs).

The Japanese have a high opinion of people with a strong sense of obligation (*giri*) who repay favours (*on*) bestowed on them. By contrast, those who neglect their obligations lose the trust and support of others. The provision of foreign aid by Japan can be interpreted as repaying favours received by the country from the leader of its *uchi*. As the *Diplomatic Bluebook 1991* states, during the 1970s, Japan's role within the Western camp was confined to the economic field.[10] Gradually, however, Japan began to undertake other responsibilities, thus reinforcing its role within the in-group (*uchi*).

Japanese Diplomacy after the End of the Cold War

The collapse of much of the communist camp and the end of the Cold War brought about tremendous international political transformations. As the *Diplomatic Bluebook 1991* states: "The end of the Cold War has made the conceptual meaning of the Western stance ambiguous."[11]

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In the new political climate, human rights and democracy became the centre of universal attention. Japan adopted new aid guidelines with the aim of introducing political conditionalities to its foreign aid policy. By doing this, the Japanese Government was showing its willingness to promote democracy and human rights as part of its duty as a member of the Western camp.

Another possibility that the end of the Cold War has offered is the chance for Japan to work more closely with the East Asian countries, so that in the future Japan can identify itself as a member of a new in-group (*uchi*) that includes East Asia. However, so far the Japanese Government has been reluctant to form a new in-group and has reacted very cautiously to Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's proposal to form an East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) that would exclude the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.

Japan's reluctance to join the EAEC is partly due to opposition to the caucus from Washington and the Japanese Government's fear of undermining its special relationship with the United States. This fear can be attributed to a residual Cold War mentality when Japan regarded Washington's opinions highly and followed American initiatives closely. In this context, Japan's decision on whether to join the EAEC or not has rested on its readiness and ability to overcome its dependency (*amae*) complex in relation to the United States.

It is important to note that the Japanese Government has chosen the Asia-Pacific region as a main theatre of Japanese diplomacy because it includes not only Asian countries, but also some Western countries. This has meant that the Japanese Government has looked for ways to establish a new *uchi* with Asian countries without hurting relations with the existing *uchi* with Western countries.

The possibility of the existence of two in-groups (*uchi*) in the future may pose a few challenges for Japan. Among them: how well can Japan deal with human rights issues in Asia, and what is Japan's position regarding the "Asian values" debate?

Japan's Ambivalent Attitude towards Human Rights Issues

Japan's foreign policy in Asia has been criticized for adopting lenient measures towards repressive regimes in the region. For example, when serious human rights violations occurred in Burma (1988), China (1989) and Indonesia (1991), the Japanese Government merely expressed concern about them. Only after the West had criticized such a low-cost stance, did the Japanese Government impose a number of measures against those countries. However, Japan resumed relations with regimes violating human rights as soon as they had made the slightest desirable moves in their domestic policy.

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David Arase notes that even after the violent suppressions of democracy in Beijing, Yangon, and Dili, Japan sought to avoid imposing strict measures, despite the fact that some aid donors suspended their economic assistance to China, Myanmar, and Indonesia. Arase concludes that Japan's actions:

> ...unavoidably contributed to the continuing repression of pro-democracy elements and shielded repressive regimes from the full brunt of Western economic sanctions. Japan justifies this by citing the need for continuing economic growth, but growth merely for its own sake is not the message of a mature political society. This kind of Japanese leadership inevitably bolsters repressive regimes and reflects poorly on a Japan that hopes to play a constructive role in building a global community.[12]

What may be the reason for Japan's ambivalent attitude towards the issues of human rights and democracy? There are at least three possible rationales. The first is Japan's negotiation style; the Japanese do not articulate their views in an explicit way. Instead, they tend to convey a great deal of information implicitly, through non-verbal communication. Thus, it is possible that other countries misread Japan's implicit diplomatic statements, the content of which leaves considerable room for interpretation.

Secondly, memories of Japan's cruel actions in Asia during World War II may be a reason why the Japanese Government feels that it has no legitimacy with which to speak on human rights issues or to question the rest of Asia on this matter. Additionally, there are still many unsettled wartime issues between Japan and a number of Asian countries, such as the issues of "comfort women" and the mistreatment of Allied prisoners of war (POWs). Thus, the Japanese Government has strong reasons to keep a low profile where issues of human rights are concerned.

Finally, Japan has a relatively short and shallow historical experience of democracy to enable it to evaluate it, whereas Western countries have attained this political system through a long history of political struggle. In fact, Japan adopted democracy only after opening its doors to the West in 1867, which means that the country has had less than 150 years in which to realize the ideals of democracy.

Asian Values

In the post-Cold War world, Asian countries began to articulate in clear terms the differences between "our values" and "your (Western) values". Moreover, in response to Western criticisms, some Asian leaders refused to recognize the discourse of universal values and put forward the controversial concept of "Asian values". There are at least

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two factors that can help to explain what made it possible for Asia to question the righteousness of the West.

The first factor was an end to the ideological conflict between communism and liberal democracy. During the Cold War, the West considered communism to be its main adversary and did not pay much attention to the political situations in the developing countries. If a country's regime was not communist, oppressive aspects of that country's political system were overlooked. As Singapore Senior Minister, and a leading proponent of "Asian values", Lee Kuan Yew, has pointed out: "The promotion of democracy and human rights has always been a part of U.S. foreign policy. But during the Cold War, a shared strategic interest in resisting communist expansion ... set the tone in bilateral relations."[13]

Secondly, in the 1970s and 1980s, many East Asian countries succeeded in their economic development. This gave them enough confidence to express their own stance and attitudes towards ideas from the West. The "East Asian Miracle" had a side effect; it transformed the meek and shy into the bold and politically assertive, who were not afraid to point out what they considered to be wrong with the Western way of life.[14] Even after the Asian economic crisis in 1997, when many Asian leaders seemed to have lost confidence in their ability to manage their countries, there still remained strong proponents of "Asian values".

Although there is no uniform opinion on what "Asian values" are, and Asian leaders stress different aspects of what they consider to be "Asian values", the following five leitmotifs are often expressed: Asian cultural assertions; the fall of the West; foreign interference in domestic affairs; the hypocrisy of the West; and the right to development.[15]

First of all, some politicians and opinion leaders in Asia point to the uniqueness of their culture and traditions and stress that the Western way of life is not acceptable to everyone. Lee Kuan Yew has repeatedly criticized attempts to establish the supremacy of Western culture over the culture and traditions of other countries and has stressed the cultural differences between the West and Asia. According to him, a different set of values in Asia has been beneficial for the region's economic growth. In his words: "I have tried to explain we have a different historical background and different social values. These different values have made for fast growth."[16]

Secondly, the imminent "fall of the West" has been a favourite topic in East Asia for some time. Asian leaders and opinion-makers have talked about "Western cultural decadence" and have predicted the fall of Western domination over the global economy. There are politicians in Asia who consider the expansion of the individual's rights and free-

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doms in the West as the root of all evil. For example, Lee Kuan Yew has warned of the danger of extreme individualism and freedom:

> The expansion of the rights of the individual to behave or misbehave as he pleases has come at the expense of an orderly society. In the East, the main object is to have a well-ordered society so that everybody can have maximum freedom. This freedom can only exist in an ordered state and not in a natural state of contention and anarchy.[17]

Thirdly, Western countries regard human rights issues as a matter of legitimate international concern. By contrast, some Asian politicians still insist on the "principle of non-interference" and rebuff all attempts by the West to criticize their governments. When bloody clashes erupted between the Indonesian police and East Timorese demonstrators in Dili in 1991, the international community expressed concern about the human rights violations that had taken place. The Netherlands and Canada halted their foreign aid to Indonesia. Jakarta refuted all criticisms by stating that East Timor was peacefully annexed by Indonesia in 1976 and, since then, had legitimately been its seventeenth province. Therefore, human rights issues in East Timor were a domestic matter and foreign countries should not interfere in Indonesia's domestic affairs. Jakarta also accused Western countries of trying to impose their values on Indonesia.[18]

Fourthly, Asian politicians often talk about the hypocrisy of the West's human rights policy. They accuse Western countries of practising double-standards, claiming that while the West condemns Asian countries for human rights violations, it overlooks many repressive regimes and human rights abuses elsewhere. For example, former Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen has claimed that the U.S. Government has always condemned China's human rights record, but has overlooked human rights violations in its own country. He has argued: "I know that the U.S. State Department issues human rights report on many countries but there is nothing on the U.S. human rights record... China has acceded to 17 of the 60 covenants of the (Human Rights) declaration, compared with only 15 by the U.S."[19]

Finally, for many Asian leaders, policy priorities lie in achieving economic development, not in building a democratic society. So, by stressing the importance of development, they try to justify negative aspects of their regimes. For example, a leader of Myanmar's State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) has justified the country's military rule as necessary for economic development and has argued that social order and economic growth are the prerequisites for democracy. He has argued: "Unless we build the proper foundations for democracy, we will be heading into troubled waters... The economy is always linked to political stability. If there is no stability, the economy cannot grow. That

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is why we have to bring the insurgents into the fold and develop the country."[20]

"Asian Values" and Japan

The Japanese Government is apparently more in favour of "universal values" than "Asian values". For example, the *Diplomatic Bluebook 1991* states that one of the most important objectives for Japanese diplomacy is "to clearly demonstrate Japan's willingness to participate in, and cooperate with, international efforts to protect universal values, such as democracy and fundamental human rights".[21]

This gives some proponents of "Asian values" a reason to criticize Japan for becoming too Westernized and losing its own cultural traits. For example, in July 2001, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir, in a speech at an international conference organized by a major Japanese newspaper, chided Japanese youth who copied the Western way of life, who wanted to be blonde, work less and play more and in the process were discarding the traditional Japanese culture of filial piety and discipline. Mahathir asked whether it was wise to copy the West. He asserted: "I suspect that just as the Japanese East Asian Empire ended in disaster, the Japanese copy of the Western ideologies and systems will have the same end result."[22]

Despite the fact that the "Asian values" thesis enjoys some popularity among the Japanese and there are conservative politicians and opinion leaders who openly support it, Japan has not yet taken a clear official stance on the issue.

Popularity of "Asian Values" in Japan

When the mass media in Asian countries began to publish articles and hold discussions on "Asian values", the debate gained some popularity in Japan as well. According to the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, although the "Asian values" argument is mainly supported by some East Asian countries, it has sympathizers among the Japanese.[23] Another Japanese newspaper, the *Sankei Shimbun*, reported that the "Asian values" argument was well received by some top civil servants in Japan.[24] The newspaper cited this as a reason why there have been heated arguments among the top bureaucrats on whether Japan should support or object to the proposal to form the EAEC that excludes the United States.

Another indicator of the prominence of "Asian values" in Japan is Mahathir's popularity. Thus, the book *No-to-ieru Ajia* (*The Asia That Can Say No*), that he wrote together with a Japanese conservative politician and prominent advocate of "Asian values", Shintaro Ishihara, was highly acclaimed in Japan and sold 70,000 copies within

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the first four weeks of its publication.[25] Furthermore, Mahathir's semi-autobiography was published in the prestigious *Nikkei Shimbun*, and subsequently he began to write a commentary column in another leading Japanese newspaper, the *Mainichi Shimbun*.

Pro-"Asian Values" Arguments in Japan

There are politicians and opinion leaders in Japan who espouse anti-Western rhetoric and show explicit support for "Asian values". These advocates of "Asian values" question the right of the West to criticize others. For example, Shintaro Ishihara recollects an episode when a former British Prime Minister talked about human rights abuses in China. In response, a Chinese leader reminded him that there had been times when signboards stating "No dogs or Chinese allowed" could be seen in Shanghai. Therefore, Ishihara argued, the Western concept of human rights is not a deep-rooted mentality. The West, especially the United States, has a lot of its own problems, but it still preaches to Asians about protecting human rights. Ishihara dismisses such an attitude as arrogant and nonsensical.[26]

Another issue that Japanese supporters of "Asian values" criticize is the Western ideology of progressivism. Thus, a top officer at the Ministry of Finance (MOF), Eisuke Sakakibara, had predicted the "end of Western progressivism". He has also pointed out that the Asian continent was characterized by the interaction and coexistence of various cultures, but after Asia encountered the West, a new dominance–subjugation relationship emerged. Sakakibara has asserted that Asia, which has the oldest and most diverse civilization in the world, will probably become the main focus of global attention in the twenty-first century.[27]

A top officer at the MOFA, Kazuo Ogura, has also been critical of the United States' excessive demands on Japan and Asia. He has argued that, "Japan should encourage Asians to talk back. If the West wants Asian economic powers to play a role in world affairs, it must be prepared to listen to Asian opinions."[28]

Asia and Japan

Japan's attitude to human rights issues in Asia has been ambivalent and its stance on the "Asian values" debate unclear. It appears that the prevailing opinion in the country is that the government should maintain balanced relations with both Asia and the West. However, there is a trend of rising nationalism in the country. Japanese neo-nationalists seek to strengthen relations with Asia and to expel Western influence from Japan by making use of the "Asian values" argument.

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Furthermore, there have been attempts by some conservative politicians and opinion leaders to rewrite Japan's history, especially its role in World War II. For example, according to Kristof, a former Japanese minister, Seisuke Okuno, has said that if there is a country guilty of war crimes it is the United States, because it dropped atomic bombs on Japan. Kristof has noted: "The popularity of this (Okuno's) view was dramatically demonstrated by the success of the film *Pride*, Japan's biggest box-office hit in early 1998, which paints wartime Prime Minister Hideki Tojo as a national hero."[29]

Though these nationalistic views do not have a wide appeal in Japan, if they do gain greater popularity, Japan's dominant moderate diplomatic policy could be affected. This, in turn, might hurt Japan's relations with Asian countries where brutal acts of the Japanese army during World War II are enduring memories.

It should also be remembered that before the War, Japanese diplomacy was heavily influenced by ultra-nationalism. Japanese ultra-nationalists demanded that the Japanese Government cut diplomatic relations with Western countries. At the same time, for the sake of its own economic survival, Japan began to enlarge its territories by invading other Asian countries under the slogan of "liberalising Asia from the West". Expansionist attempts to put Asia under Japan's rule can be described as an "expansion of *uchi* by force". As Ishida has asserted: "In order to expand the in-group beyond the country's national boundaries and absorb East Asia into the new *uchi*, Japan formed a so-called 'Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere'."[30] In the process, the Japanese forcefully imposed their own values on the Asian people by teaching them the Japanese language and forcing suppressed nations to follow the Japanese way of life. That expansionist policy ended in a self-destructive war where Japan lost all its expanded territories.

Japan's Choice in the Post-Cold War Era

The end of the Cold War has offered Japan a second chance to form a new in-group with its Asian neighbours. To successfully achieve this, Japan must learn from its past mistakes and try to maintain a fine balance between the interests of Asia and the West. Takakazu Kuriyama has provided a reminder: "In the period leading up to World War II, Japan chose an independent diplomatic course that isolated it from the international society. The mistake of the Greater East Asia Prosperity Sphere was the attempt to legitimise the pursuit of Japan's special interests by appealing to an exclusionist ideology imposed by means of military force."[31] Kuriyama calls on Japan to "coordinate the interests of different nations.

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There are three main challenges for Japan's active diplomatic role in Asia. First, Japan is the economic superpower in Asia and dominant donor of foreign aid to Asian countries. However, Japan should not be arrogant, nor should it try to impose its own values on other Asian countries. Instead, it should become an equal partner with other Asian countries.

Secondly, Japan must turn its back on narrow nationalism and overcome anti-Western, especially anti-American, sentiment. Maintaining good relations with the West is important because Japan relies heavily on security arrangements with the United States. Moreover, many Asian countries are still dependent on the U.S. military role in the region. As Ishizuka has argued: "Japan's own relations with its Asian neighbours depend largely on their perception that Japan is firmly ensconced within the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. Ironically, the pitfalls of an 'Asianism' policy divorced from Washington would only make Japan's relations with Asia more difficult."[32]

Finally, Japan should acquire more knowledge about, and get a better understanding of, other Asian countries and their varied and rich cultures. The former Ambassador of Japan to Indonesia, Taizo Watanabe, has pointed out that in order to strengthen ties with Asian countries, a deeper knowledge of their historical, social, and cultural backgrounds is needed.[33] At present, there is a serious lack of specialists on Asian affairs in Japan and only a limited number of Japanese academicians and bureaucrats have a significant knowledge of Asia. Another Japanese scholar has also warned that Japanese policy-makers' tendency to hold abstract arguments about what Asia is or should be without understanding Asian realities could be detrimental for Japanese diplomacy.[34]

Conclusion

Japan has indicated a willingness to change its conventional wisdom of a minimalist approach and to play an active role in Asia. If this intention is sincere, Japan can no longer afford to ignore the thorny issue of human rights in Asia and continue its present ambivalent attitude towards "Asian values".

The end of the Cold War offers Japan a second chance to establish a new *uchi* with its Asian neighbours. In the past, Japan made a number of costly mistakes. Among them, its expansionist policy before World War II, that used the pretext of "liberalizing Asia" from the West, and Japan's cultural supremacy, were most egregious. If Japan learns from these mistakes, refrains from imposing its own values on other countries and at the same time strives to establish balanced diplomatic relations with both Asian and Western countries, the new *uchi* could

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contribute to the world's prosperity and stability. It is said that history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy and the second time as farce. However, if history lessons are learned well, this calamitous pattern can be avoided.

NOTES

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Japan's Post-Cold War Security Policy: Bringing Back the Normal State

BHUBHINDAR SINGH

This article argues that Japan has incorporated a greater political dimension into its post-Cold War security, constituting a dramatic shift from its isolationist strategy of one-country pacifism during the Cold War. This change is due to both domestic and international factors. The article utilizes the concept of "normalization" to describe Japan's greater contribution to international security affairs. Japan's normalization is demonstrated by highlighting the following significant changes in its security policy: revisions to the U.S.-Japan security alliance, Japan's participation in the TMD project, the strengthening of Japan's military and intelligence-gathering capabilities, possible revisions to Japan's Peace Constitution, and Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.

Introduction

Japan's security role in both regional and international affairs has experienced a marked shift from that which it used to play during the Cold War. During the Cold War, Japan adopted an isolationist regional strategy of one-country pacifism. This strategy rested on two pillars: first, Japan pursued economic diplomacy while avoiding any political role in international security affairs; and second, Japan entrusted its stake in regional security to the United States.[1] However, Japanese passivity towards security affairs came under scrutiny at the onset of the post-Cold War era. The resultant vulnerability of the East Asian security environment, characterized by a possible drawdown of U.S. military forces and the uncertainty posed by the rise of China,

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prompted Japanese policy-makers to call for a reassessment of Japan's strategy of one-country pacifism. This reassessment introduced a greater political dimension in Japan's security policy.

The key event that led to a shift in Japanese security policy was Tokyo's embarrassing experience during the Persian Gulf War of 1991. Despite Japan's huge financial contribution to the war effort, its reluctance to dispatch non-combat personnel to the Gulf exposed it to criticism from both the West and the Arab states.[2] The Gulf War experience was a significant event for Japan, for two reasons. First, it challenged Japan to think beyond the defence of its territory and participate in defining new rules to govern the international security environment in the post-Cold War period.[3] Secondly, the Persian Gulf War demonstrated to Japan that military power still shapes international relations to a significant degree in the post-Cold War era, and that Japan was ill-equipped to deal with military crises.[4]

Following the Gulf War, the security dimension in Japanese foreign policy gained prominence. In response to the emergence of new external threats, Japan adjusted its security policy to allow for greater participation in the international security environment. It did so in particular ways. First, in 1992, Tokyo enacted the International Peace Co-operation Law, which allowed Japan to play a more active security role through greater participation in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO). The passing of this Law led to the successful deployment of 1,800 Japanese troops to Cambodia as part of a UN-sponsored peacekeeping force in 1992.[5] Secondly, Tokyo reformulated the National Defence Programme Outline (NDPO) in 1995 — the first time since 1976. That reformulation emphasized Japan taking a greater role in UNPKOs, and the Self-Defence Force (SDF) addressing low-intensity threats such as terrorism.[6] Thirdly, in 1996, the Japanese Government agreed to enter into talks with the United States to revitalize the U.S.-Japan alliance to make it more relevant to the post-Cold War environment. In the new U.S.-Japan Joint Security Declaration, both countries outlined an agenda for a greater role for Japan in expanded defence co-operation, including defence planning, research and development, missile defence, and diplomacy towards China.[7]

In explaining Japan's enhanced security role in regional affairs, this article employs the concept of a "normal" state. In the conceptualization of a normal state, the omission of Japan comes as no surprise to many Japan observers. This is due to the stark imbalance in Japan's involvement in the economic versus security spheres globally since the post-war years. While it has reached the position of being the second largest economy in the world, Japan has deliberately avoided taking any

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major political initiative in international affairs. This imbalance in Japan's behaviour is supported and perpetuated by internal controls, such as the Peace Constitution, social and legal norms that restrict the role of its military, the limitation of defence expenditures to one per cent of the gross national product (GNP), and Japan's adherence to the three non-nuclear principles. Such a structure has led to the emergence of a pacifist culture within Japanese society, critical of an enhanced political role for Japan in international affairs.[8]

The relationship between Japan's post-Cold War security policy and the concept of normalization is drawn by highlighting significant changes in Japan's security policy. The following changes are noteworthy:

- revisions to the U.S.–Japan security alliance;
- Japan's participation in the Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) project in partnership with the United States;
- the strengthening of Japan's military and intelligence-gathering capabilities;
- possible revisions to the sacrosanct Peace Constitution; and,
- Japan's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat.

The article highlights changes to Japanese security policy after August 1998. There are two reasons for this approach. First, developments in the Japanese security realm that occurred after August 1998 have not been accounted for in detail compared with those prior to that date.[9] Secondly, the developments in Japanese security policy during this period are significant and provide a telling account of the future direction for Japanese security policy. Although these changes coincided with the launch by North Korea of a ballistic missile on 31 August 1998, the intention of the article is not to argue that that incident caused the changes in Japanese security policy.[10] Instead, the article intends to show that these developments reflect a general long-term post-Cold War trend for Japan.

The article begins by outlining how a normal state behaves in the political/security sphere and how Japan does not fit that definition. The second section highlights the possible motivations for Japan to pursue the path of normalization in the post-Cold War era. The third section is a discussion on the signs suggesting that Japan is already on the path towards normalization. The fourth section draws a relationship between the changes discussed in section three and the concept of normalization. The final section analyses the implications of a normal Japan for regional security.

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Normalization and Japan

To illustrate how Japan's behaviour is not normal in the security sphere, it is contrasted to a general description of the way "normal" states behave. This is not an all-encompassing definition of a normal state, but an abbreviated one, highlighting salient features, of which there are two. First, based on Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, a state reserves the right to use force, in an act of individual or collective self-defence, to protect its political independence, territorial integrity, and citizens, and property abroad. Article 51 states: "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security."[11] Secondly, following from the first feature, the state has to maintain a capable military to ensure its survival in the international environment, which is described as anarchical.[12] For states to ensure their survival, they need to pursue self-help strategies.[13] This is carried out through internal balancing (moves to increase economic capability, to increase military strength, and to develop clever strategies) and external balancing (moves to strengthen and enlarge one's own alliance or to weaken and shrink an opposing one).[14] In such states, military power would be regarded as arguably the most important in ensuring the states' survival and protection of population and territory from both internal and external threats.

How is Japan "not normal"?

Japan's behaviour in the security sphere is not considered normal, as it does not fulfil the two features highlighted above. First, despite being a member of the United Nations, Japan had given up its right to the use of force. It has a Constitution that renounces war as an instrument of national security policy. The core of this distinctive aspect of its Constitution is Article 9, which imposes restrictions on the conduct of Japan's security policy. In it, Japan renounces war as a sovereign right of the nation; repudiates the use of force as a means for settling international disputes; and does not recognize the state's right to belligerency.[15] Renouncing the right to belligerency engendered a "pacifist" sentiment among the Japanese people. Both the Peace Constitution and the emergent pacifist sentiment facilitated the task of economic reconstruction, but imposed limitations on Japan's participation in regional security affairs.

Secondly, the role of Japan's military has been deliberately constrained in its growth and missions by established social and legal norms. As the euphemism implies, the SDF is to be limited to self-defence, and is not to take part in collective defence efforts.[16] Although

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the SDF's role has expanded over the years — from an organization devoted to relief and welfare to a greater role in managing regional security, international peace-keeping, and disaster relief — it is still very limited. The highly critical Japanese public, which is very influential in shaping the role and responsibilities of the SDF, is not supportive of an enhanced military role for it. In the eyes of the public, the SDF lacks a convincing political rationale and this has led to the military being remarkably insulated from Japanese society.[17] As a result, the SDF draws its greatest political strength from outside Japan, especially through its security ties with the United States.[18]

Besides these social norms, many controls have been placed on the Japanese Defence Agency (JDA) to restrict both the role of the SDF and its influence in defining security policy. The role of the JDA is curtailed by several control mechanisms installed within the agency. Some of the controls include the fact that: Japan's security policy is not made by the JDA but by inter-ministerial co-ordination processes, which include the Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and the Cabinet Legislation Bureau;[19] there is outside penetration in both the higher and lower echelons of the JDA;[20] and, inside the JDA the uniformed officers of the SDF are subordinate to civilian personnel. Such a structure introduces a system of strict supervision of the professional military by a civilian bureaucracy that lacks both military ethos and perspective.[21]

To complement these social and legal controls, a number of auxiliary constraints have been implemented to restrain the growth and role of the SDF. First, there is the limit of 1 per cent of gross national product (GNP) imposed on defence spending.[22] Secondly, Japan has also announced its adherence to the three non-nuclear principles: it will not produce, possess, or let others bring into Japan nuclear weapons.[23] Despite occasional statements from some prominent figures in Japan that hint at Japan abandoning its non-nuclear status,[24] Tokyo has held strongly to the non-nuclear principles, and has been one of the strongest proponents of nuclear non-proliferation.

Motivations for Becoming a Normal State

There are two main reasons for Japan to normalize: the first is related to the altered post-Cold War international structure, and the second is motivated by domestic issues in Japan.

International Structure

With the demise of the Soviet Union, Northeast Asia was faced with a new security architecture, characterized by an altered balance of power

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and new threat perceptions. Japan had to review the kind of role it would play in the international structure. It had to decide whether its security policy, which rested on the twin pillars of the U.S.–Japan alliance and the Peace Constitution, would be relevant to the new era.[25] This unstable environment is characterized by the following potential threats, as perceived by Japan:[26]

China: Japan is faced with the rise of China as a key player in the new international structure.[27] China's inevitable rise as the biggest economy in Asia would logically suggest that it will play a greater military role in the future. Although Sino-Japanese relations are characterized by ever-expanding co-operation in the economic sphere, political ties are tainted by mutual distrust and suspicion owing to many issues, such as the historical legacy, the territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, the strengthening of the U.S.–Japan security alliance,[28] and agreement on the Theatre-Missile Defence (TMD) project between the United States and Japan. In the Japanese Defence White Paper 2000, China was identified as one of the major threats that Japan has to address. The main concerns are China's strengthened missile arsenal — its development of new *Dongfeng*-21 long-range missiles — and the increasing activity by Chinese naval vessels near Japanese territorial waters.[29]

North Korea: One of the main short-term threats that have emerged in the post-Cold War era for Japan is the North Korean nuclear threat. The severity of the threat is manifested not only by the unpredictable nature of the North Korean regime, but also by the provocative posture of Pyongyang. On 31 August 1998, North Korea launched a suspected missile over Japan, with parts of it falling into the Sea of Japan. This incident attracted strong reactions from the Japanese, as the missile violated Japanese airspace and highlighted the extent of the development of North Korean missile capabilities. Japan's security is also threatened by North Korean spy boats intruding into Japanese waters. For instance, on 22 December 2001, the Japanese Coast Guard exchanged gunfire with suspected North Korean spy boats, which led to the sinking of one boat in the East China Sea. The Japanese Defence White Paper 2000 stated that Pyongyang should be watched closely regardless of recent promising signs of a relaxation of tensions on the Korean Peninsula.[30]

Russia: Japan is also concerned with instability in Russia. As far back as 1990, Seizaburo Sato had dismissed notions that the Soviet threat had disappeared as the Russians still had an enormous nuclear and conventional arsenal while experiencing instability on the domestic front.[31] More recently, Russia has pursued a strategy of playing a more active role in influencing the balance of power in East

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Asia. It has established a "strategic partnership" with China.[32] Russia and China, together with the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgystan have also signed a pledge to counter U.S. influence and support the creation of a multipolar world.[33] Russia has also been wooing back its old Cold-War allies, such as North Korea and Vietnam.[34] Moreover, Russo-Japanese relations are tainted by the long-standing territorial dispute over the Kurile Islands.

U.S. Drawdown: The seriousness of the potential threats to Japan has been accentuated by the possibility of a significant U.S. military drawdown from East Asia, and as a result, the removal of the U.S. security guarantee to Japan.[35] Although the U.S.–Japan alliance has been strengthened and the United States has pledged to maintain about 100,000 troops forward-deployed in East Asia, because of the demise of the Soviet threat, Japan is faced with the possibility of a drawdown of U.S. forces. This could be due to domestic pressures in the United States, and Japan's reluctance to reform and assume a larger role in sharing the security burden in East Asia. The issue is accentuated by the Japanese public's disquiet over the large numbers of U.S. military personnel in Japan, especially in Okinawa which hosts a disproportionate number of American troops. In response, Japan would have to rely less on the United States security guarantee and consider providing for its own security needs.

Domestic Reasons

Besides reasons related to the international structure, there have also been pressures on the domestic front that have pushed Japan to pursue the path of normalization. Japan was faced with increasing pressures to reform the domestic constraints that had hindered a more active role in international affairs. This was especially apparent after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when the international community criticized Japan's policy of "checkbook diplomacy". The domestic pressures to reform were accentuated by Japan's inability to address security threats at home. Japanese crisis management during the Kobe earthquake and the sarin gas attack by the Aum Shinrikyo cult on the Tokyo subway in 1995 left much to be desired, and generated criticism from the media and the public at large. The government and the media became keenly aware of the inadequacies of the old defence policies. The problem was so acute that even the Socialist Democratic Party abandoned its long-held pacifist views.[36]

Signs of Japan Becoming a Normal State

Japan's increasing influence in the security sphere is underscored by significant changes to its security policy and defence capabilities.

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Tokyo took bold steps to better equip itself against internal and external threats to national security.

Revisions to the U.S.–Japan Defence Guidelines

The revisions to the U.S.–Japan Defence Guidelines in early 1999 signalled three significant changes to Japan's role in the post-Cold War security environment. First, Japan's military was authorized to take various measures in the event of "emergencies near Japan", allowing the SDF to provide rear-area logistical support to U.S. forces during crises near Japan and to conduct rear-area search and rescue operations for military personnel in situations not involving a threat of force or use of military power. Secondly, the Japan–U.S. Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) was revised. The revision allows for expanded bilateral co-operation to include the supply of fuel and necessary goods during emergencies near Japan instead of during peacetime only. Thirdly, the SDF Law was amended to allow for the evacuation of Japanese citizens from overseas. Moreover, SDF personnel could use weapons for self-defence in providing rear-area support and engaging in search-and-rescue operations for U.S. military personnel.[37]

These revisions point to greater reciprocity between Japan and the United States in the U.S.–Japan alliance. The revisions also laid the legal ground for the SDF to co-operate with the U.S. military both inside and outside Japanese territory. Although Japan's role is limited to providing logistical support to the United States, it is a development that hints at Japan assuming greater responsibilities in international security.

The initial sign of increased co-operation between Japan and the United States in security affairs became evident in the fight against international terrorism. Japan implemented an anti-terrorism bill, which led to Tokyo sending Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) ships to the Indian Ocean in November 2001 to assist the United States in that area.[38] This is a key development in Japanese security policy as it is the first time that Japanese forces have participated in a post-war military campaign.[39]

Possible Revisions to the Constitution

There have been increasing calls, from both the Japanese Government and society at large to review the Peace Constitution — the sacrosanct law that had forced Japan to maintain an exclusively defensive military force. Executives of the five political parties reached an agreement in 1999 to establish research panels in both the lower and upper houses of the Diet to review the Constitution.[40] As it is one of the main pillars of Japanese security policy, a review of the Constitution constituted a

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significant development. It would lead to the lifting of some of the constraints that have prevented Japan from adopting a more active political role, and hence allowing Japan to assume a greater share of the burden in regional conflict management and peacekeeping activities. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has expressed his view that the war-renouncing Article 9 of the Constitution should be revised.[41] He heads a national strategy body within the LDP to discuss long-term national strategies, with an emphasis on revising the Constitution.

Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) Project

Tokyo has revealed plans to spend up to 30 billion yen between 2000 and 2005 to collaborate with the United States in the sea-based TMD project.[42] Having a TMD system would allow Japan to track and shoot down incoming ballistic missiles.[43] Besides providing Japan a viable shield against the growing missile threat regionally, the TMD programme is also a conduit through which Japan could possess advanced missile technology, and this would strengthen Japan's defence posture.

According to the Japanese Government, the TMD system does not violate the 1969 parliamentary resolution limiting space programmes. In defending the government's move, Hiromu Nonaka, who was the Chief Cabinet Secretary in 1998, said that it was the most effective and productive means for the nation's defence. He added that the government's decision to acquire the TMD system was a "purely defensive" mechanism and the only alternative for Japan in view of the proliferation of ballistic missiles.[44]

Japan's participation in the research phase of the TMD project with the United States was reaffirmed during U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's visit to Tokyo in May 2001. During meetings with Armitage, Japanese officials said they shared the American concern about the spread of ballistic missiles and "understood" the need for TMD.[45] This message was again conveyed by Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell during their first meeting in June 2001.[46] Subsequently, the Pentagon asked the JDA to expand the areas of joint technology research on the missile defence system, focusing on ship-borne anti-ballistic missiles as well as radar-tracking technology.[47]

Reconnaissance Satellites

As a significant departure from Japan's post-war dependence on the United States for crucial satellite data, Japan has implemented a project to develop its own intelligence-gathering capabilities. The launch of an intelligence satellite in March 1999 allowed Japanese authorities to

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analyse photographs and other data picked up without having to rely on U.S. sources.[48] The Japanese Government explained that possessing such a satellite was not going against the 1969 Constitution as the satellite would only be used for defensive purposes. The then (1998) Minister of Trade and Industry, Kaoru Yosano, said that such satellites could be used for many purposes, and not just in the military field. Yosano said that these satellites could, among other things, be used for environmental research and to detect smugglers and illegal fishing vessels.[49] The Japanese Government hopes to launch eight of these spy satellites by 2007.[50]

The Japanese Government also inaugurated an intelligence council in 1998. The council is headed by the Defence Agency chief and comprises ten other top uniformed and civilian defence officials. The formation of the council is aimed at strengthening the Defence Agency's information-gathering and analyses capabilities and to prepare for various possible contingencies.[51]

The Japanese Military

The Japanese Defence Agency has continually strengthened the nation's defence capabilities. In recent years, both its navy and air force were strengthened with systems and equipment to acquire long-range capabilities.

- *Air Force*: In the area of air defence, the Defence Agency initiated plans to purchase tanker aircraft that would enable Air Self-Defence Force (ASDF) aircraft to refuel while in flight. The introduction of tanker aircraft has strengthened Japan's air defences in two ways. First, fighter planes and Aircraft Warning and Control System (AWAC) aircraft can stay airborne for longer periods of time and, in turn, enhance Japan's ability to detect quickly any possible air threats. Secondly, the introduction of tanker aircraft will greatly extend the range of the ASDF's F-15 fighters and F-2 ground attack aircraft, giving them the ability to attack bases in neighbouring countries.[52] The JDA has said that the introduction of tanker aircraft would help strengthen the nation's ability to participate in international operations, including UN peacekeeping operations, as the aircraft could facilitate the long-distance transportation of equipment and personnel.[53]
- *Navy*: The already formidable Japanese navy has also been strengthened. Besides acquiring an additional Aegis-class destroyer, the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) has also purchased a 13,500 metric tonne transport vessel, Japan's largest surface vessel, which could serve as a light

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aircraft carrier during wartime once its deck is modified and equipped with Harrier-2 vertical takeoff and landing aircraft.[54]

- *Military Drills*: The Japanese military has increasingly been taking part in multilateral drills. In October 2000, Japan began two weeks of submarine rescue drills with the United States, South Korea, and Singapore, in which Japanese rescue ships and a submarine were deployed.[55] In November 2000, the United States and Japan for the first time jointly undertook massive air and sea evacuation exercises that mobilized a combined 20,000 troops.[56] In June 2001, the JMSDF joined navies from fourteen other nations on the first large-scale minesweeping exercise in the Pacific. The Japanese coastguard has also taken an active interest in combating the increasing incidence of piracy in the Strait of Malacca and adjacent areas. Besides sending a coastguard vessel to India and Malaysia to participate in drills, the Japanese Coast Guard is also expected to periodically send a large patrol boat to Southeast Asian waters to participate in joint training with regional counterparts to deter piracy.[57] Japan's increasing participation in such collaborative efforts reveal a slow but steady enhancement of a Japanese presence in the regional security environment.

Permanent UN Security Council Seat and Peacekeeping Operations

Japan has stepped up efforts in its bid for a permanent United Nations Security Council (UNSC) seat.[58] The Japanese Government believes that it is both ready and has the capacity to assume greater global responsibilities through the United Nations, particularly the Security Council. To the Japanese, the bid is justified on several grounds. First, Tokyo is the second-largest financial contributor to the regular UN budget and to the UNPKO budget.[59] Japan provides approximately 20.6 per cent of the UN budget, second only to the United States, exceeding the combined contributions of four permanent members of the UNSC (excluding the United States).[60] Secondly, the bid is supported by Japan's increased participation in UNPKO, following the enactment of the International Peace Cooperation Law in 1992.[61] The key development was Tokyo's deployment of 1,800 troops to Cambodia as part of an UN-sponsored peacekeeping force in 1992.[62] Following that experience, Japan conducted successful peacekeeping and humanitarian relief operations in Mozambique in 1993, Zaire in 1994, and the Golan Heights in 1996.[63] More recently, the Diet passed a revision to the peacekeeping co-operation law, which would allow peacekeeping forces to engage in such activities as monitoring compliance with ceasefire agreements and disposing of surrendered

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weapons. The amendment also relaxes restrictions on the use of weapons by SDF personnel to virtually protect troops of other countries in the event of an attack.[64] Thirdly, Japan's bid for a permanent UNSC seat is also supported by its strong support in promoting international disarmament and non-proliferation while firmly keeping to its three non-nuclear principles of not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into its territory.[65]

Analysis of Japan's Normalization

The changes to Japanese security policy seem to suggest a consolidation of an expressed need for Japan to attain normalization. The changes seem to challenge the very features that gave Japan the label of a "unique" or "not normal" country. The discussion about revising the sacrosanct Peace Constitution is no longer taboo. The establishment of a panel to examine this issue signals a realization on the part of Japan that it has to assume a more active political role in the post-Cold War security environment. The success of the review panel is highly debatable but its mere formation is a telling sign of the current sentiments of the Japanese people on the Peace Constitution.

The post-Cold War security environment has also had an impact on the kind of role the SDF should assume. The changes in Japanese security policy have suggested a more active role for the SDF. The strengthening of U.S.–Japan defence co-operation provides the framework for the legitimacy of bilateral defence co-operation not only for the defence of Japan but also "areas surrounding Japan".[66] Based on the revised guidelines, Japan would provide active support to U.S. forces, and not just permission for American use of Japanese bases.[67] Although the guidelines only refer to Japan providing logistical support to U.S. forces, they serve as a crucial initial step for Japan to play a greater role in future collective defence efforts — Japan's assistance to American troops in their fight against international terrorism is a case in point.

Secondly, the SDF has been strengthened in terms of military hardware, intelligence-gathering capabilities, and crisis management procedures. These not only make the SDF a better equipped ally to the United States in collective defence efforts, but also provide the SDF with the capability of exercising autonomous defence to enhance Japan's own security.

Thirdly, there have also been calls in some quarters in Japan to raise the stature of the Defence Agency to that of a Ministry. An association was formed among Upper House Diet members in January 2001 to effect

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that transformation as part of the restructuring of central governing bodies.[68]

However, Japan's path towards normalization cannot be associated with a return to a militaristic past. Laying claim to be a "normal" nation would mean that Japan is a responsible member of the international community and does not threaten its neighbours.[69] The pacifist nature of Japan since World War II has led to the evolution of social and legal norms which are today widely accepted by Japanese society at large. These norms have become entrenched and make it difficult to construct a scenario for Japan to return to militarism. Even if domestic developments were to evolve in the direction of remilitarization, it would be enormously difficult for Japan to extricate itself from the complex web of integration in which it has allowed itself to be bound, and to develop its own independent military capabilities.[70] Those concerned with Japanese remilitarization should be encouraged by Japan's unswerving commitment to its three non-nuclear principles, the recently strengthened U.S.–Japan security alliance, and its emerging activism in multilateral diplomacy.[71]

Implications of Japan's Normalization

Japan's normalization would have widespread implications for the larger East Asian security environment. The addition of a politically more active Japan to the East Asian security equation would shift the region's existing balance of power and modify Japan's bilateral relations with neighbouring countries, especially when historical memories of Japan's aggressive colonial rule still linger among some countries.

Strengthened U.S.–Japan Relations

Notwithstanding several thorny issues, one of which is the U.S. military presence in Okinawa, U.S.–Japan relations would be expected to strengthen following Japan's attainment of normalization. There are several reasons for this.

First, Japan could see a strengthened U.S.–Japan alliance as a source of legitimacy for expanding its military capabilities and implementing a more proactive foreign policy to support its normalization process. This is particularly important, as a strengthened U.S.–Japan alliance would mitigate the fears and suspicions of neighbouring countries. Japan's neighbours see the presence of the United States as a check against the possible resurgence of a militaristic Japan.

Secondly, Japan's normalization would introduce greater reciprocity between Japan and the United States under the security alliance. Japan, together with the United States, would be a more active participant in managing the regional security environment, and assume

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a bigger role in times of conflict. There would be a greater balance between the two countries in military burden-sharing and crisis decision-making.[72] The emergence of this reciprocity would be a sign of a healthier alliance, where the U.S.–Japan alliance could then evolve towards something akin to America's strategic relationships with major West European allies.[73]

Thirdly, Japan's normalization fits into the overall U.S. strategy of maintaining a preponderance of American power in East Asia. With both countries concerned at the rise of China, Japan's enhanced security role would aid the Americans in maintaining the balance of power in East Asia to its advantage. In the hope of Tokyo assuming a larger stake in regional security, the United States has repeatedly asked Japan to participate in collective defence efforts in partnership with it. This is especially true of the current Bush Administration. Secretary of State Colin Powell, during Senate confirmation hearings, has said that a strong relationship with Japan is the foundation of U.S. strategy in the Asia-Pacific region.[74] When U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage visited Japan in May 2001, he encouraged Tokyo to reappraise some of the constitutional restrictions placed on the SDF so as to allow Japan to engage in collective defence efforts under the security alliance.[75] This call was repeated by Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz to a delegation of Japan's ruling coalition parties during its visit to Washington in June 2001. According to Taku Yamasaki, Secretary-General of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party, Wolfowitz said that the Bush Administration views China as "the country most difficult to handle" in terms of security concerns. As a result, Wolfowitz stressed that the United States and Japan need to work closely on security matters in the Asia-Pacific region.[76]

Strained Sino-Japanese Relations

One of the main consequences of Japan's normalization could be the straining of ties between Japan and China. This should be analysed against the backdrop of the general nature of post-Cold War Sino-Japanese relations. Owing to a relatively high degree of distrust and suspicion, Beijing's relations with Tokyo have remained strained since the end of the Cold War. Although Japan has been pursuing a policy to overcome the legacy of World War II in its foreign relations, historical memories still harm ties with China.

To China, Japan has not issued a satisfactory apology for its wartime aggression, which, to the Chinese, raises the possibility of Japan reverting to its old ways. The Chinese believe that such a Japan would likely be more independent of the United States and generally more assertive internationally.[77] The situation is accentuated by the inability of the Japanese to come to terms with the "history issue". Japan's

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neighbours have repeatedly expressed doubts about Tokyo's intentions because of issues that hint at Japan's return to a militaristic past, such as the textbook controversy, the Japanese refuting facts about the Nanjing Massacre,[78] and occasional statements by Japanese officials that challenge the defensive nature of Japan's military capabilities.[79]

An increasingly normalized Japan would probably lead to a proportionate increase in Tokyo's political influence in the Asia-Pacific region. This would directly challenge China's emerging influence in the region, leading to competition for regional influence between the two Asian giants. The Chinese are further disturbed at the emerging influence of Japan because of the strong presence of the United States in East Asia. As a result of the U.S.-Japan security alliance, which signifies the strong links between Washington and Tokyo, the balance of power in East Asia is tilted against Beijing.

Despite attempts to improve Sino-Japanese relations from both sides, many issues, such as the historical legacy, the territorial dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, the strengthening of the U.S.–Japan alliance, and the TMD project between the United States and Japan, have strained relations between the two countries. More recently, Sino-Japanese relations have been affected adversely by a spate of thorny issues, such as the dispute surrounding the controversial history textbook for Japanese middle school students; Japan's granting of a visa to former Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui to visit Japan, which led to a cancellation of a scheduled trip to Japan by the head of the Chinese legislature, Li Peng; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's decision to visit the Yasukuni Shrine in August 2001 to honour Japan's war dead.

The relationship between the two Asian giants would likely deteriorate further unless both appreciate each other's role in the new international environment and take steps towards peaceful co-existence. Tokyo has to counter nationalistic elements from shaping the political discourse in Japan. Addressing this issue in a sincere fashion would probably boost Japan's bilateral relations with its neighbours, including China, and the overall perception of Japan being a responsible partner in the Asia-Pacific region. China has to accept the reality of Japan pursuing the path of becoming a "normal" state. This would mean China accepting Japan's expanded political role supported by a strengthened military. The peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region is only possible if both Japan and China accept each other as partners and work as such.

Enhanced Sino-Japanese Competition in Southeast Asia

If there is competition for regional influence between Japan and China, it would extend to Southeast Asia. Both countries have had a strong

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economic and political presence in Southeast Asia. Beijing has gradually increased its presence in Southeast Asia through expanded bilateral trade and political relations with the various Southeast Asian countries. Relations between China and the countries of Southeast Asia have become increasingly close, as leaders from both sides have exchanged visits to "patch up ancient differences and sign substantive agreements on everything from border demarcations to trade and even military co-operation".[80]

Japan has had a big stake in Southeast Asia's booming economic growth rates even prior to the onset of the Asian financial crisis in 1997. Japanese investments, imports, and tourists have contributed to the progress and development of all Southeast Asian countries. The importance of Japan's economic role was underscored during the 1997 crisis, as Japan was the largest contributor of funds to the ailing Southeast Asian economies.[81] As part of post-Cold War Japanese policy, Tokyo has also been expanding its political presence in Southeast Asia through establishing bilateral security links with the Southeast Asian countries and supporting multilateral efforts, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Council for Security and Co-operation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP).

Both Japan and China hope to gain greater influence in Southeast Asia in the political and economic spheres. For the Southeast Asian countries, the presence of both China and Japan serves the region's interests. Besides trade and investments, the presence of these Asian giants ensures the peace and stability of Southeast Asia — Japan balancing against the uncertainty posed by the rise of China, and China serving as a check against the possibility of a militarily resurgent Japan.

Conclusion

This article has highlighted the shift in Japanese security policy in the post-Cold War period. The shift is shown through examining changes in the post-August 1998 period in Japanese security policy. The changes denote not only a strengthened Japanese defence posture, but also a review of the old pillars of Japanese security policy — the U.S.–Japan alliance and the Peace Constitution. The changes in these areas suggest that Japan is becoming more of a normal state — more active in both regional and international security affairs commensurate with its economic influence.

Japan's slow but irreversible normalization process coincides with the changing sentiments of Japanese society. The once pacifist society, rejecting any role for the Japanese military, has become more accepting of Japan assuming a larger military role in security affairs. This is

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reflected in three ways. First, opinion poll surveys indicate that those in support of revisions to the Peace Constitution are greater than those who oppose such revisions. Secondly, there is an increased tolerance level in addressing and debating issues that hint at Japan's militaristic past, such as the legalization of the Hinomaru (national flag) and the Kimigayo (national anthem) as national symbols. Thirdly, even the main opposition parties in Japan have changed their attitudes towards a larger military role for Japan. One of the most significant shifts was the Japanese Communist Party endorsing the deployment of the SDF in the event of a military attack on Japan. It is a significant shift for a party which has always viewed the existence of the SDF itself as a violation of the Constitution.[82] Even the leader of the largest opposition party in Japan, Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan), Yukio Hatoyama, has called for a review of the five principles regarding the deployment of the SDF in UN peacekeeping operations, in keeping with his view that the Constitution should be revised;[83] and Takenori Kanzaki, leader of the New Komeito Party in the ruling coalition, has said that he does not object to lifting the freeze on Japan's participation in UN peacekeeping operations.[84]

Owing to the high degree of suspicion and fear, Japan has a big task in enhancing the confidence level and improving relations with its East Asian neighbours. The most important task for Japanese leaders is for them to deal with Japan's militaristic past more forthrightly to reassure Asia-Pacific countries that militarism does not dominate Japan's political discourse. The Japanese Government would have to express greater willingness in participating in collective defence and security measures in order to show Japan's commitment to preserve peace and stability in the international environment. To fulfil such a role, Tokyo would need to revise the Peace Constitution and lift some of the controls on the SDF for its quick deployment during crises.

In turn, the international community also has a responsibility to ensure that Japan's normalization process allows it to emerge as a responsible actor in the international security environment. The international community would need to accept Japan's rising involvement in security affairs. This would entail engaging Japan bilaterally and multilaterally.

NOTES

1. Paul Midford, "Japan's Leadership Role in East Asian Security Multilateralism: The Nakayama Proposal and the Logic of Reassurance", *Pacific Review* 13, no. 3 (2000): 370.
2. Japan initially pledged US$4 billion to Operation Desert Shield within weeks after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. After much criticism from the United

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States, Japan further pledged an additional US$9 billion soon after the land war began in January 1991. See Susan J. Pharr, "Japan's Defensive Foreign Policy and the Politics of Burden", in *Japan's Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Coping With Change*, edited by Gerald L. Curtin (New York: East Gate Book. 1993), p. 253. For an insightful account of Japan's role in the Gulf War, see Michael H. Armacost, *Friends or Rivals: An Insider's Account of U.S.–Japan Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). Michael Armacost was the United States Ambassador to Japan during the Persian Gulf crisis. See also Courtney Purrington and A.K., "Tokyo's Policy Responses During the Gulf Crisis", *Asian Survey* 21, no. 4 (April 1991).

3. Mike M. Mochizuki, "American and Japanese Strategic Debates", in T*owards a True Alliance: Restructuring U.S.–Japan Security Relations*, edited by Mike M. Mochizuki (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), p. 57; Armacost, op. cit., p. 98.
4. Michael Green, "State of the Field Report: Research on Japanese Security Policy", *Access Asia Review* 2, no. 1 (National Bureau of Asian Research, September 1998): 13.
5. Barbara Wanner, "Japan Strives to Raise Profile on Regional Security", Japan Economic Institute, Report No. 8A, 28 February 1997, p. 4. Prior to the Cambodian experience, Japan sent six civilian UNPKO missions between 1988 and 1992, but they were inconspicuous. These missions included one political officer each to UNGOMAP (Afghanistan/Pakistan), UNIMOG (Iran/Iraq), and UNAMIC (Cambodia), as well as 27 election supervisors to UNTAG (Namibia) in 1989 and three electoral observers to UNAVEM II (Angola) in September 1992. See Mayumi Itoh, *Globalisation of Japan: Japanese Sakoku Mentality and U.S. Efforts to Open Japan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 162.
6. Christopher W. Hughes, *Japan's Economic Power and Security: Japan and North Korea* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 181–91.
7. Green, op. cit. See also "Completion of the Review of the Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defence Co-operation", U.S.–Japan Security Consultative Committee, New York, 23 September 1997.
8. Peter Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 108.
9. For developments in Japan's political/security role in the post-Cold War period up to August 1998, see Tsuneo Akaha, "Japan's Security Agenda in the Post-Cold War Era", *Pacific Review* 8, no. 1 (1995): 45–76; Mayumi Itoh, "Expanding Japan's Role in the United Nations", *Pacific Review* 8, no. 2 (1995): 283–302; Hughes, op. cit.; Masao Kunihiro, "The Decline and Fall of Pacifism", *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (January/February 1997), pp. 35–39; Michael J. Green and Benjamin Self, "Japan's Changing China Policy: From Commercial Liberalism to Reluctant Realism", *Survival* 38, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 35–58; Eric Heginbotham and Richard J. Samuels, "Mercantile Realism and Japanese Foreign Policy", *International Security* 22, no. 4 (Spring 1998): 171–203; Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glaser, "Chinese Apprehensions About Revitalisation of the U.S.-Japan Alliance", *Asian Survey* 37, no. 4 (April 1997): 383–402; Rajan Menon, "The Once and Future Superpower: At Some Point is Likely to Build a Military Machine that Matches its Economic Might", *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 53, no. 1 (January/February 1997); Michael Green, *Arming Japan: Defence Production, Alliance Politics, and Postwar Research for Autonomy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); and Reinhard Drifte, *Japan's Foreign Policy in the 1990s* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).
10. I have argued for this case elsewhere. See Bhubhindar Singh, "The 1998 North Korean Missile Launch and the 'Normalization' of Japanese Statehood", *Issues & Studies* 37, no. 3 (May/June 2001): 142–62.
11. Richard G. Maxon, "Nature's Eldest Law: A Survey of a Nation's Right to Act in Self-Defence", *Parameters* (Autumn 1995), pp. 57–58.

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12. An anarchic international environment is referred to as a condition where the occurrence of violence is possible, as there is no formal authority to prevent it. (See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979). The notion of anarchy is accepted by the various strands of international relations theory - neorealism, neoliberalism and constructivism. They only differ, in the words of David Baldwin, in its nature and consequences. According to Baldwin, the difference between neorealism and neoliberalism is that the former sees anarchy as placing more severe constraints on state behaviour than does the latter. See David A. Baldwin, *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 5. The constructivists differ from the neorealists and neoliberals in their understanding of anarchy, as they do not accept the notion of anarchy as a given phenomenon. The idea of anarchy is specific to each country based on a social context. (See Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What a State Makes of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics", *International Organisation* 46, no. 2 (Spring, 1992).
13. See Waltz, op. cit., pp. 102–4.
14. Ibid., p. 118.
15. Peter Katzenstein, and Nobuo Okawara, "Japan's National Security: Structures, Norms, and Policies," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (Spring 1993): 284. Originally cited in Kyoko Inoue, *MacArthur's Japanese Constitution: A Linguistic and Cultural Study of its Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). The peace clause of the Constitution, Article 9, reads as follows:

    > *Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.*

    In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized. See Javed S. Maswood, *Japanese Defence: The Search for Political Power* (North Sydney, N.S.W.: Allen Unwin, c. 1990), p. 2.
16. Glenn D. Hook, *Militarisation and Demilitarisation in Contemporary Japan* (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 46.
17. Peter Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 108.
18. Ibid., p. 100.
19. Important ministries, such as MOF, MOFA, and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) have placed their officials in JDA, thus influencing the process of defence policy-making. See Katzenstein and Okawara, op. cit., pp. 273–76.
20. Four of the top eleven bureaucratic posts are always reserved for officials from other ministries. Moreover, positions at the lower levels are also staffed by officials from other ministries. See Katzenstein and Okawara, op. cit., p. 276.
21. Katzenstein and Okawara, op. cit., p. 277. Originally cited in Taketsugu Tsurutani, "Japan's Security, Defence Responsibilities, and Capabilities," *Orbis* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 100.
22. Former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone attempted to lift the one per cent ceiling in the mid-1980s but failed. See Thomas U. Berger, "Alliance Politics and Japan's Postwar Culture of Antimilitarism," in *The U.S.–Japan Alliance: Past, Present, and Future*, edited by Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronin (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999), p. 197.
23. Johnson Chalmers, *Japan, Who Governs?: The Rise of the Developmental State* (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1995), p. 265.
24. In October 1999, the deputy defence chief Shingo Nishimura created an uproar by

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advocating nuclear weapons for Japan. See "Japan's deputy defence chief forced to resign", *Straits Times*, 21 October 1999, p. 23.

25. Kenneth Pyle, "Restructuring Foreign and Defence Policy: Japan", in *Asia-Pacific in the New World Order*, edited by Anthony McGrew and Chrostopher Brook (London: Routledge in association with Open University, 1998), pp. 121–36.
26. There are other threats Japan has to cope with, such as the territorial dispute in the South China Sea. However, the three potential threats discussed here are among the most important ones. For Japan's concern with the South China Sea territorial dispute, see Lam Peng Er, "Japan and the Spratlys Dispute", *Asian Survey* 36, no. 10 (October 1996): 229–44.
27. For a change in Japanese policy towards China, see Michael Green, and Benjamin Self, "Japan's Changing China Policy: From Commercial Liberalism to Reluctant Realism", *Survival* 38, no. 2 (Summer 1996).
28. Banning Garret and Bonnie Glaser, "Chinese Apprehensions about Revitalisation of the U.S.-Japan Alliance", *Asian Survey* 37, no. 4 (April 1997).
29. "Defence Report", *Asahi Shimbun* (Internet version), 6 July 2000.
30. "Agency white paper urges monitoring of Japan", *Asahi Shimbun* (Internet version), 28 July 2000.
31. Martin Weinstein, "Japan's Foreign Policy Options: Implications for the United States", in *Japan's Foreign Policy After the Cold War: Coping with Change*, edited by Gerald Curtis (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 223. Original source: Seizaburo Sato, "Jidaino henka ga yori kyokana domeio motomeru" [Changes in the times call for still stronger alliance], *Chuo koron*, March 1990.
32. For the warming of ties between Russia and China, see Michael Walker, "Russia and China Cosy Up to Each Other", *Straits Times*, 18 August 1999, p. 40; and "China and Russia step up military ties", *Straits Times*, 18 January 2000, p. 27. China and Russia are expected to sign a political treaty of friendship in mid-2001. See "Fear of U.S. Supremacy drives China-Russia Treaty", *Straits Times*, 15 January 2001, p. A5.
33. "Russia, China and 3 Central Asian states sign pledge", *Straits Times*, 26 August 2000, p. 21; and "Despite weakened state, Russia is still a pain to U.S.", *Straits Times*, 8 July 1999, p. 12.
34. "Russia woos back old allies", *Straits Times*, 10 February 2000, p. 14. For Russia and North Korea signing a new friendship pact, see "N. Korea and Russia sign new friendship pact", *Straits Times*, 10 February 2000, p. 22.
35. The issue of Japan's military dependence on the United States which cannot last forever, was one of the main reasons highlighted for the renewed interest in constitutional change discussed by the Lower House Constitutional Research Panel. The other reasons were the resurgent nationalism among Japan's youth, and Tokyo's participation in peacekeeping missions. The fact that the issue of the removal of the security guarantee for Japan is discussed shows that it is one of the main concerns for Japan. See "Renewed interests in changing Japan's charter," *Straits Times*, 5 May 2000, p. 31.
36. Thomas Berger, "Alliance Politics and Japan's Postwar Culture of Antimilitarism", in Green and Cronin, op. cit., pp. 190–91.
37. Naoko Aoki, "Diet panel approves Japan–U.S. defence bills", *Kyodo News*, 26 April 1999.
38. A total of six ships with 1,200 crew members have been dispatched. Three ships — two destroyers (*Kurama* and *Kirisame*) and one supply ship (*Hamana*) — were sent to waters near Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean for information-gathering purposes. Three others ships — a supply ship (*Kure*), a minesweeper (*Uraga*) and a helicopter-carrying destroyer (*Sawagiri*) — were sent to Karachi to provide relief supplies to Afghan refugees. See "MSDF ships head for anti-terror campaign", *Asahi Shimbun*

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(Internet version), 26 November 2001 (http://www.asahi.com/english/international/K2001112600219.html)

39. Brad Glosserman, "What is Normal for Japan?", *Japan Times*, 24 January 2002.
40. "Panels in Diet to discuss Constitution," *Asahi Shimbun* (Internet version), 2 March 1999. A formal review of the Constitution was launched in January 2000, where panels set up were given five full years to complete their deliberations. See "Japan launches historic review of Constitution", *Straits Times*, 21 January 2000, p. 31.
41. "Koizumi would revise Article 9", *Daily Yomiuri* (Internet version), 25 April 2001.
42. "Japan's Constitution", *The Economist*, 27 February 1999, p. 25.
43. Ibid.
44. "Japan, U.S. agree to join in missile defence system", *Washington Post*, 26 December 1998.
45. "Tanaka blasts Bush missile defence plan", *Asahi Shimbun* (Internet version), 2 June 2001.
46. "Tanaka Reassures Powell on National Missile Defence", *Daily Yomiuri* (Internet version), 20 June 2001.
47. "U.S. seeks more Japan missile input", *Asahi Shimbun* (Internet version), 2 June 2001.
48. *Yomiuri Shimbun On-line*, 1 April 1999. According to reports, the decision is based on the government's assessment that while U.S. satellites have better resolution, Japan can develop adequate technologies that cover reconnaissance, disaster-response, and so on; that while the U.S. satellites are cheaper, in the mid-term, home-made satellites are easier to maintain; and that home-made satellites are more suitable for contingencies where the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force and the Japanese Maritime Safety Agency have to co-operate with each other.
49. *Asahi Shimbun* (Internet version), 8 September 1998.
50. Jin Zeqing, "Japan's Military Build-up Worrying, *China Daily*, 6 September 2000 (http://ptg.djnr.com/com/ccroot/asp/publib/story.asp).
51. "Defense panel eyes possible Taiwanese dilemmas", *Mainichi Shimbun* (Internet version), 9 February 1999.
52. "In-flight refuelling", *Mainichi Shimbun* (Internet version), 23 March 1999.
53. "Defence Agency set to buy tanker planes", *Daily Yomiuri* (Internet version), 26 February 1999.
54. FBIS-CH-200-0422, *Beijing Xinhua Hongkong Service*, 22 April 2000.
55. Dow Jones Interactive. Original source: "Japan's Military", *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 4 October 2000.
56. Ibid.
57. "Coast Guard to join S.E. Asian drill: Japanese vessel to help deter high seas piracy", *Daily Yomiuri* (Internet version), 7 June 2001.
58. Japan first made a bid for a permanent Security Council seat at the United Nations in 1994. See Mayumi Itoh, "Expanding Japan's Role in the United Nations", *Pacific Review* 8, no. 2 (1995): 283.
59. Former Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura said before the UN General Assembly, "One cannot but question the fairness of a situation in which Japan is expected to pay an assessed contribution that exceeds the sum of the contributions made by the four permanent members of the Security Council, excluding the U.S." See "Japan wants a say for cash it gives UN", *Straits Times*, 23 September 1999, p. 30.
60. The four permanent members' contributions are China (1.0%), Russia (1.1%), UK (5.1%) and France (6.5%). See "An Argument for Japan's Becoming Permanent Member", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/japan.html).
61. The International Peace Co-operation Law set forth five preconditions for participa-

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tion in UNPKO: (1) the parties in the armed conflict have agreed on a ceasefire; (2) the parties in the armed conflict and host countries have given consent for deployment for the operation and to Japan's participation in the operation; (3) the operation must ensure strict impartiality; (4) the Japanese contingent must withdraw should any of the above requirements cease to be satisfied; and (5) the use of weapons is limited to the minimum amount necessary to protect the personnel's lives. See Mayumi Itoh, "Globalisation of Japan: Japanese Sakoku Mentality and U.S. Efforts to Open Japan" (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 161–64.

62. Barbara Wanner, "Japan Strives to Raise Profile on Regional Security", Japan Economic Institute, Report No. 8A (28 February 1997), p. 4. Prior to the Cambodian experience, Japan sent six civilian UNPKO missions between 1988 and 1992, but they were inconspicuous. These missions included one political officer each to UNGOMAP (Afghanistan/Pakistan), UNIMOG (Iran/Iraq), and UNAMIC (Cambodia), as well as 27 election supervisors to UNTAG (Namibia) in 1989, and three electoral observers to UNAVEM II (Angola) in September 1992. See Itoh, op. cit., p. 162.
63. Sadaaki Numata, "Japan: Toward a More Active Political and Security Role", *RUSI Journal* (June 1996), p. 13. For brief descriptions on each of the missions, see Itoh, op. cit., pp. 164–66.
64. "Revision expands SDF Role", *Asahi Shimbun* (Internet version), 8 December 2001 (http://www.asahi.com/english/politics/K2001120800177.html)
65. "An Argument for Japan's Becoming Permanent Member", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.
66. Paul S. Giarra, and Akihisa Nagashima, "Managing the New U.S.–Japan Security Alliance: Enhancing Structures and Mechanisms to Address Post-Cold War Requirements", in *The U.S.–Japan Alliance*, edited by Green and Cronin, p. 101.
67. Ibid.
68. *Asahi Shimbun* (Internet version), 9 August 2000.
69. *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 4 October 2000.
70. Hans Maull, "Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers", *Foreign Affairs* 69 (Winter 1990–91): 98.
71. Ralph Cossa, "Avoiding New Myths: U.S.–Japan Security Relations", *Security Dialogue* 28, no. 2 (1997): 227. For multilateralism and Japanese foreign policy, see Denis T. Yasutomo, *The New Multilateralism in Japan's Foreign Policy* (London: MacMillan, 1995)
72. Mike Mochizuki, and Michael O'Hanlon, "A Liberal Vision for the U.S.–Japanese Alliance", *Survival* 40, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 127–28.
73. Mike M. Mochizuki, "A New Bargain for a Stronger Alliance", in *Toward A True Alliance: Restructuring U.S.–Japan Security Relations*, edited by Mike M. Mochizuki (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), p. 36.
74. "Japan-U.S. alliance enters new phase", *Daily Yomiuri* (Internet version), 23 January 2001.
75. Richard Armitage was a member of a bipartisan study group of U.S. experts on Asian security, who released a report in October 2001, which was to be an important source for learning the Bush Administration's policy towards Asia. The report demanded that Japan take on more responsibility in maintaining Asia's security, and reinterpretation of the Constitution to allow Japan to exercise collective self-defence. See "Bush may demand bigger Japanese defense role", *Daily Yomiuri* (Internet version), 18 January 2001; "Govt. sees Bush bringing Japan, U.S. closer", *Daily Yomiuri* (Internet version), 15 December 2000. It has also been reported that officials well-versed in Japanese affairs have taken up key positions in the Pentagon, the Department of State, and the National Security Council. See Koichi Kato, "Japan–U.S. alliance has taken a step backward", *Asahi Shimbun* (Internet version), 14 March 2001.

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76. BBC Monitoring Global Newsline, 1 June 2001. Original source: Kyodo News Service, 1 June 2001.
77. Thomas J. Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance and the Security Dilemma in East Asia", *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999): 52.
78. The most recent incident being the furious protest Beijing issued on a seminar entitled "The Biggest Lie of the 20th Century: Documenting the Nanjing Massacre", organized by a nationalist group in Osaka. See "China's fury over Nanjing forum", *Straits Times*, 25 January 2000, p. 21.
79. The occasional statements by some prominent Japanese officials have also made the situation worse for Japan. In August 1997, at a delicate time just prior to then Prime Minister Hashimoto's visit to China, Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiroku Kajiyama expressed the view that the U.S.-Japan defence co-operation guidelines cover the Taiwan Strait (FBIS-EAS, 19 August 1997). In May 1998, Toshiyuki Takano, Director-General of Japan's Foreign Ministry's North American Affairs Bureau, caused a stir while testifying before the Diet's Lower House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee. He testified that the scope of the U.S.-Japan guidelines is defined by the 1960 Japanese Government position paper, the defence guidelines of which are said to cover South Korea and Taiwan (FBIS-EAS, 25 May 1998). In October 1999, Japan's Deputy Defence Minister Shingo Nishimura, a nationalist, was forced to resign when he said that Japan should consider possessing nuclear weapons. See "Japan's deputy defence chief forced to resign", *Straits Times*, 21 October 1999, p. 23.
80. Japan announced the world's largest assistance measures to support the ASEAN economies. Some of the main measures announced were:
    a. Assistance funds totalling US$44 billion to the ailing economies.
    b. The Miyazawa Initiative: a package of support measures totalling approximately US$30 billion, of which US$15 billion will be made available for the medium and long-term financial needs of the Asian countries for economic recovery, and another US$15 billion to be set aside for their possible short-term capital needs during the process of implementing economic reforms.

    Other measures announced were the Asian Growth and Recovery Initiative, and the Emergency Economic Package. See "Asian Economic Crisis and Japan's Contribution", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 9 December 1998 (http://www/mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/econo_crisis/index.html)

    During the Indonesian crisis, Japan extended a loan of US$1 billion for the Indonesian Government to carry out economic reforms (*Straits Times*, 8 April 1998, p. 1). Japan was also prepared to play the role of an intermediary and persuade the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other world financial bodies to provide loan payments to Indonesia (*Straits Times*, 17 March 1998, p. 4)
81. In a March 1999 *Yomiuri Shimbun* poll, a majority of the respondents, 53 per cent, supported revision of the Constitution. On the other hand, only 31 per cent said that it was better not to change it. This trend was also evident in *Mainichi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun* polls conducted in 2000. In a *Mainichi Shimbun* poll carried out in April 2000, about 50 per cent of the respondents supported revisions to the Constitution. See "Renewed Interest in Changing Japan's Charter", *Straits Times*, 5 May 2000, p. 31. The poll by *Yomiuri Shimbun* conducted during the same period showed that about 60 per cent of the respondents favoured a proposal to revise the nation's basic law. See the 2nd Yomiuri Shimbun proposal for revision of the Constitution (http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/kenpou-e/survey.htm).
82. According to JCP Chief of Secretariat, Kazuo Shii, "If the nation faces an extreme emergency, it is only natural that the SDF be utilized for the safety of the public." See "JCP to accept the use of SDF if security at risk," *Yomiuri Shimbun On-line*, 20 September 2000.

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83. "Minshuto shaken by UN mission issue", *Yomiuri Shimbun On-line*, 29 September 2000. These principles are seen as rather rigid and prevent Japan from assuming a greater political role in UNPKO.
84. BBC Monitoring Global Newsline, 2 June 2001. Original source: Kyodo News Service, 2 June 2001.

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Vietnam–ASEAN Co-operation after the Cold War and the Continued Search for a Theoretical Framework

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This article seeks to analyse the strength and weaknesses of the three main international relations (IR) approaches, namely, neo-realist, liberal institutionalist, and constructivist frameworks, applied to the Vietnam–ASEAN relationship since the mid-1980s. While the making and implementation of Vietnamese foreign policy with regard to ASEAN has shown some clues congruent with both neo-realist and liberal institutionalist frameworks, the constructivist approach also seems to have become an increasingly promising one, providing additional explanations to the Vietnam–ASEAN relationship. Yet, to confirm the plausibility and superiority of any theoretical model depends to a large extent on greater efforts at gaining access to and interpreting various types of sources related to the foreign policy of Vietnam.

The Background and the Puzzle

Following its open-door reforms programme (widely known as *doi moi*) introduced in 1986, Vietnam began to develop all-sided relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The process of Vietnam–ASEAN *rapprochement* was marked by Vietnam signing the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in 1991 and its membership of the organization in 1995 — the only formal international treaty and organization that the country has entered since the end of the Cold War. Myanmar and Laos joined ASEAN in 1997 and Cambodia in 1999. It has been widely acknowledged that after East Timor gains full independence, it too will seek membership in ASEAN. The mode of ASEAN co-operation now covers the entirety of the Southeast Asian

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region. These developments were contrasted with what had happened earlier in Southeast Asia: in general, the relations between Vietnam and ASEAN had reflected the patterns of amity and enmity among regional states along the ideological divide during the Cold War and especially during the Vietnam War. Furthermore, when Vietnam sent troops to Cambodia in 1979, relations between Vietnam and ASEAN became more hostile. For more than two decades, the existence of ASEAN and the Indochinese group, consisting of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, effectively divided Southeast Asia into two opposing camps.

Why did Vietnam decide to join ASEAN in 1995? Why did it attach such significance to peace and co-operation in Southeast Asia for the cause of national political and economic development? What had prevented Vietnam from doing so earlier? For the last fifteen years, starting from 1986 when the reforms in Vietnam officially began, considerable efforts (many of which will be reviewed below) have been made to explain the shift towards a co-operative posture by Vietnam with regard to the Southeast Asian course of co-operation — defined as the process of policy co-ordination in which goal-oriented actors adjust their behaviour to the actual or anticipated preferences of others.[1] Yet, while more adequate and satisfactory answers to these questions have not yet been found, new developments in Vietnam and the rest of Southeast Asia, not to mention those in the rest of the world, keep adding new dimensions to the study of Vietnam's foreign relations. A search for a more plausible theoretical framework with a higher level of abstraction, therefore, is required.

The end of the Cold War also changed the context of Vietnam's foreign relations with big powers. The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, effectively terminating the Soviet-Vietnamese alliance officially established in 1978 with the conclusion of the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation. Relations between Vietnam and China were normalized in 1991, with the two states agreeing not to return to the type of alliance that had existed in the past and which was broken with the border war between the two countries in 1979. Besides, although relations between Vietnam and the United States started to improve in the early 1990s, and the two countries normalized diplomatic and trade relations in 1995 and 2001 respectively, ideological differences and the legacy of the Vietnam War still complicate this bilateral relationship. The impacts to Vietnam's foreign relations in Southeast Asia have been curious. On the one hand, Vietnam no longer enjoys alliance-type relations with any big power. On the other hand, it enjoys greater freedom in the conduct of foreign policy. The absence of constraints imposed by big power confrontation on smaller states and the relaxation of ideological constraints in world politics following the end of the Cold

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War suggest that Vietnam and other Southeast Asian states can be freer to follow their nationalist agenda. The region, therefore, would be "ripe for rivalry"[2] because the regional states have traditional suspicions about, and territorial disputes with, each other; moreover, many of them possess more military capabilities as a consequence of several decades of steady economic growth. However, as instability and even hostility became more evident elsewhere, Vietnam became committed to peace and stability in Southeast Asia. Moreover, the process of ASEAN enlargement starting from Vietnam's membership has perhaps facilitated a zone of peace in all of Southeast Asia. Since international relations are often about co-operation and conflict and, in general, it has been agreed that states find it difficult to co-operate with one another, the shift in Vietnamese foreign policy to cultivate co-operative relations with ASEAN is worth studying. To borrow Milner's words, why nations co-operate with each other is always "the particular empirical puzzle".[3]

The specific puzzle about Vietnam's co-operative behaviour towards ASEAN also has a theoretical aspect to it: explanations provided by established international relations theories have not been totally obvious. Liberals often claim that peace is more possible among states with domestic democratic institutions. By Western standards, however, Vietnam and other Southeast Asian states are not democracies. At the same time, as some of the regional states are undergoing democratic transformation, the prospect of inter-state conflicts in Southeast Asia should become more likely, as critics of democratic peace would suggest.[4] Any non-democratic zone of peace should, therefore, be an anomaly for democratic peace theorists. What factors have contributed to a "non-democratic" peace in Southeast Asia?

Realists have long argued that co-operation is an anomaly in its approach and, if co-operation is materialized, ideology is a weak cause and balancing power (or common external threat) is the main reason. Therefore, Vietnam–ASEAN co-operation and non-democratic peace in the region would be justified because the threat of a post-Cold War China looms large. Yet, from a rational point of view, it would be, historically and practically, too provocative for a small state like Vietnam to consider the giant neighbour as a threat, especially when the very notion of the "China threat" is still globally problematic. Besides, ASEAN has not been a security alliance in the traditional sense; economic co-operation among its members has always been modest; and the combination of capabilities of ASEAN as a collective entity does not match those of China. However, Vietnam chose to become a member of ASEAN and finds a long-term link between its national security, regime legitimacy, and economic welfare with the co-operative

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relationship within ASEAN. There must, therefore, be other factors for the country to decide with whom it aligns itself and cultivates co-operative relations. This article seeks ways to identify these factors.

Explaining Vietnam–ASEAN Co-operation

In this section, three general hypotheses to explain the puzzle will be considered. The logics of these hypotheses will be explored, with a brief analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each of them. A short literature review will also be provided to show how watchers of Vietnamese foreign policy have developed their arguments from these hypotheses.

Hypothesis One: Co-operation with external actors is more likely when a state tries to balance a threat from a third country.

This hypothesis is based on realist approaches,[5] with principal logics, such as:

1. Building overall capabilities (namely, economic and military) and co-operation, and possibly alliances with other states, are more likely if a state wants to cope with an external threat by these acts of internal and external balancing.
2. Co-operation is likely among states facing similar external threats even with the existence of ideological differences.
3. Co-operation is short-lived and opportunistic because states always consider each other as potential enemies.

This explanation seems to dominate the works on Vietnam–ASEAN co-operation. It has been suggested that China fills the criteria to be a new source of threat for the region.[6] Many scholars have, therefore, considered the recent changes in the foreign policy of Vietnam as serving the aim of countering the growing threat from China. For example, Thayer suggests that Vietnam's membership of ASEAN would serve "the prime strategic objective of securing a more peaceful international environment in which to guarantee Vietnam's national security against external threat".[7] Wurfel observes that Vietnam's membership in ASEAN "may have helped to some extent in discouraging Chinese expansionism".[8] Zagoria also maintains that Vietnam and other ASEAN countries share a concern about China and want to have a better control of their own strategic environment, which leads them to stand and co-operate together.[9]

Communist ideology does not prevent Vietnam and ASEAN from forging closer co-operation. Many scholars have found that the leaders in Hanoi have "distanced themselves from Marxist-Leninist ideology"

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to adopt the model of East Asian development and the "general ASEAN approach to internationalism and globalization"[10] both for economic welfare to be attractive to foreign investment and trade,[11] and to give a new legitimacy to the Communist Party of Vietnam.[12] As long as China remains a possible threat, even a distant one for the time being, the neo-realist approach seems to explain the rationale for Vietnam joining ASEAN.

Yet, several problems can be detected in the neo-realist model. Firstly, the focus of big power relations has occurred at the expense of relations among small states. Does the Vietnam–ASEAN relationship have any relevance within the framework of an intra-regional context, namely, relations among small states? When applied to developing countries, as some scholars have pointed out, basic concepts of balance of power, state survival, anarchy, and conflict have proven to be problematic, both theoretically and empirically.[13]

Secondly, the very notion of a Chinese threat, while debatable in the West, seems to be taken for granted in the case of Vietnam–ASEAN co-operation. Some have observed that Vietnam now stays alone coping with China and suggests that Vietnam and the United States seem to have a common security interest in developing closer co-operation in order to cope with an increasingly powerful China.[14]

Empirically, however, as Abuza has noted, "the neo-realist paradigm was untenable, unrealistic, and costly", for the reason that if Vietnam has to balance China, there is no one to counter with, as the United States is politically unthinkable; ASEAN is too small and, for the most part, has good relations with China; and Vietnam is also not aiming to do so.[15] It will not be wise to reject and abandon the (neo)realist model. At the same time, however, its shortcomings beg the incorporation of other theoretical approaches.

Hypothesis Two: Co-operation is more likely when there exists among states institutions or regimes to regulate their relations in specific issue-areas.

The neo-institutionalist approach basically suggests that states co-operate because institutions — defined as principles, rules, norms, and decision-making procedures around which expectations of states converge on specific issue areas[16] — facilitate co-operation through the functions they perform. They allow the decentralized enforcement of agreements, improve each side's information about the behaviour of others, and lower transaction costs, thus reducing states' uncertainty and mitigate their fears that others will defect, inducing co-operation.[17]

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That Vietnam has stopped competing with ASEAN on the vision of a regional order and has adopted ASEAN norms and principles for regional behaviour, codified in the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Co-operation, seems to support the relevance of the neo-institutionalist view. The basic ASEAN code of conduct that involves self-restraint, consultation and consensus, third-party mediation, and agreeing to disagree has been considered as the basis for the successful case of intra-ASEAN co-operation since 1967 and, as a result, suggest a high possibility for co-operation between Vietnam and ASEAN.[18] Moreover, as Abuza also notes, Vietnam's perception and policy suggest that there has been a transformation of paradigm from neo-realism to complex interdependence, with the country increasingly engaging with ASEAN's political and economic institutions.[19] It has been suggested that examples of ASEAN's regional co-operation raise incentives to look beyond realism and that "neoliberal institutionalism, in linking the logic of self-interested co-operation to the concerns of security policies, offers some hypothetical possibilities for fostering stability".[20]

The neo-institutionalist approach, however, has some weaknesses. In the first place, its proponents are, in fact, supportive of the neo-realist approach. Even Hoang and Abuza acknowledge that ASEAN institutional frameworks help Vietnam to collectively restrain future errant behaviour by China as a main "security concern", and that membership in ASEAN helps Vietnam to build a more prosperous country, for "a poor country is not a strong one".[21] Secondly, ASEAN institutional frameworks and their positive effects on regional co-operation do not look like standardized international institutions and regimes that liberal institutionalists have in mind. Kahler has observed that ASEAN's institutional frameworks are in the main "highly informal and explicitly reject legalization in their design,"[22] and are "under-institutionalized".[23] Moreover, in security matters, ASEAN treaty structures have not produced an elaboration of military co-operation,[24] and very little has been done with regard to intra-regional trade liberalization and economic co-operation,[25] although "the logic of greater integration between the ASEAN countries" and ASEAN's collective bargaining leverage *vis-á-vis* international economic and financial institutions have "strengthened the need" for economic co-operation.[26] Lastly, but not least importantly, institutional arrangements help to explain in general the ease of co-operation but not the reason why countries co-operate in the first place. Therefore, although ASEAN has been poorly institutionalized, the reason that Vietnam shifted its foreign policy towards greater co-operation with ASEAN seems to lie outside the framework of neo-liberal institutionalism.

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Hypothesis Three: Co-operation is more likely when states share a collective/transnational identity.

The constructivist approach[27] serves as a basis for this hypothesis, with the main logics being:

1. States are social actors. States do not co-operate when there are differences in the way they see each other in a specific social context (that is, different state identities). Put in a different way, co-operation is less likely if states do not share a collective/transnational identity. State identity refers to "the concepts of self and other held uniquely by each state".[28] Therefore, a state that has no contact with other states cannot have an identity.[29] Cronin also develops a term of "transnational identity" that involves the "self-other conceptions that encompass broader social categories that are shared by at least two states".[30]
2. States can have multiple and overlapping identities, but only stick to those that benefit them. Therefore, co-operation is not limited to democratic regimes and co-operation can materialize even between states of different political regimes, provided that they have a common state identity that can ensure their interests. Co-operation within the constructivist approach, thus, does not imply a focus on irrational forces within politics.
3. Co-operation will be more long-term if relations among states are based on a collective identity among them, often supported by geographical proximity and similarity in historical experience, among other things. Co-operation, therefore, is more likely at the regional level.

Several scholars, although sensitive to its weaknesses, have heralded the promise of constructivism in international relations theory.[31] A growing body of literature has also begun to emerge on ASEAN co-operation along the constructivist argument.[32] Acharya uses the concept of collective identity in security communities to explain the relative peace in Southeast Asia. The security community of ASEAN, as he argues, is not necessarily a product of a "liberal-democratic milieu featuring significant economic interdependence and political liberalism". Rather, it is a "self-conscious exercise in learning and collective identity formation" by the regional states whose politics are still illiberal, economic interdependence still rudimentary, and security concerns mainly domestic in character.[33] Acharya argues that international relations in Southeast Asia have been centred on the effort to construct a regional identity and the expansion of ASEAN should also be seen through this lens.[34]

Studies of Vietnam's past foreign policies also suggest some leads for constructivism, but they tend to explain conflicts. For example, co-

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operation among socialist states has proved to be difficult. Theoretically, relations between socialist states have been thought to be based on "a common identity rather than transitory interests". However, this common communist identity was characterized by an "informal ideology"[35] with a preference for a hierarchical mode of relations among socialist states. This suggests how relations between Vietnam and China deteriorated in the 1970s when the former found out that socialist principles did not prevent the latter from acting like a "big brother". The same line of argument can be used to explain the break-up of Sino–Soviet and Vietnam–Cambodia relations in the 1960s-1980s.[36]

Other scholars have also tended to show how the question of state identity actually drove Vietnam and ASEAN apart. On the one hand, being influenced by communist ideology, Vietnam saw ASEAN as similar to organizations that the United States set up to serve its Cold War objectives. The friend–enemy dichotomy, together with the past involvement by several countries in the region in the Indochina conflicts, helped shape Vietnam's hostile and suspicious attitudes towards ASEAN until the early 1990s. For example, in 1971, ASEAN was described as a "product of U.S. aggressive and interventionist policy".[37] Furthermore, in 1976 Hanoi put forward a four-point proposal initiating the principles to govern inter-state relations in Southeast Asia, stressing the "genuine independence" of Southeast Asian states — a criticism of what Vietnam perceived as the dependent identity of the ASEAN states.[38] On the other hand, believing in the superior characteristics of their state, some in Vietnam had even held ambitious visions of a hierarchical regional order in favour of Vietnam.[39] In short, in the past, the perception by Hanoi of an ideological, and perhaps, military superiority, which led to a competition over state identities, and preferences over a hierarchical vision of a regional order favourable to Vietnam, had prevented Vietnam–ASEAN co-operation.

However, there has not been any substantial constructivist work focusing on the question of contemporary Vietnam–ASEAN co-operative relations. As mentioned above, Vietnamese foreign policy-watchers have often cited the benefits of Vietnam co-operating with ASEAN, especially from the realist point of view. As constructivists tend to see the effects of state identity in the making and implementation of a country's foreign policy, the definitions of state and transnational/common identity suggest that greater focus should be placed on the Vietnamese leadership's perceptions of Vietnam's role in Southeast Asia, its vision of regionalism, its thinking on commonalities (such as historical experience, developmental needs, etc.) between Vietnam and other Southeast Asian states, as well as its perceptions of

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the incentives that bind regional states together, from which membership in, and co-operation with, ASEAN is possible. There is, however, a lack of analysis on how Vietnam changed its long-held perceptions about ASEAN. For example, observations that Hanoi stressed the idea of "peaceful coexistence" in relations with other Southeast Asian states and put them in the category of "close neighbours" with whom friendship must be cultivated,[40] or that there was a shift from a preoccupation with big powers to a "more balanced position in which co-operation with other Southeast Asian states plays a significant role",[41] have not been supported by the evidence. In addition, the question of the "self-other" re-examination in the Vietnam–ASEAN relationship — central to the constructivist approach — has not been elaborated. Similarly, statements by Vietnamese officials about "a sense of belonging" serving "as a long-lasting link for the new type of association Vietnam forges with other ASEAN states",[42] does not allow us to deduce whether commonality of state identities or security concerns now serve as the basis for Vietnam–ASEAN co-operation. Furthermore, it is difficult to understand if the notions of belonging and long-lasting links serve as mere propaganda or true beliefs of the leadership in post-Cold War Vietnam.

In short, while the constructivist approach may explain the mode of co-operation that ASEAN has promoted, as well as the reasons why Vietnam and ASEAN failed to co-operate in the past, there is a lack of a substantial body of literature that provides evidence to show that constructivist arguments might also be helpful in understanding the co-operation between Vietnam and ASEAN.

As each of the hypotheses has advantages and disadvantages, and until adequate research is conducted, one should refrain from concluding which of these hypotheses is the most useful. Tentatively, this writer agrees with the constructivist hypothesis. The tentative argument is that there is a strong linkage between the search for a new state identity in the aftermath of the Cold War and the making of foreign policy in Hanoi. The search for a new state identity — which is compatible to that of the ASEAN states — suggests that Vietnam would forge a closer co-operative relationship with the ASEAN states, and that membership in ASEAN would inform Vietnam's present and future foreign policy.

Several contributions might possibly be made by a thorough revisit of all possible hypotheses laid out above. If one could confirm the most useful hypothesis about the co-operative posture of Vietnam towards ASEAN, a better understanding of its policies might be achieved by Vietnamese policy-watchers and the policy-makers of countries that have relations with Vietnam. For example, we could answer with some

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certainty whether Vietnam's conduct of foreign policy towards ASEAN has shown a "shallowness or flatness" in which ASEAN membership was "an end in itself".[43] Or we could even (dis)regard the possibility of the country being willing to take part in a future alliance against China.

Theoretically, if the constructivist hypothesis is confirmed, a new approach can be relied on to study what conditions are conducive to long-term regional co-operation, and how major international relations theories, which have often focused on big power relations, would be remedied by an additional focus on the behaviour of smaller states in geographical proximity, sharing a collective/transnational state identity. Furthermore, the same hypothesis might also be applied to other regional states that followed Vietnam in seeking membership of, and developing co-operation with, ASEAN. The question of state identity might also be important for the study and comparison of foreign policies of the former and remaining socialist states that have been grappling with the end of the Cold War. According to Holsti, analysts of international relations should employ four independent variables, namely, autonomy, welfare, security, and regime maintenance, to explain and compare the foreign policies of different states.[44] State identity should, therefore, also be another variable added to the framework that Holsti has suggested.

Many scholars have suggested that a state posture towards co-operation depends on the contestation in the domestic political arena over policies in specific issue-areas. Therefore, approaches focusing on the decision-making process at the domestic and bureaucratic levels may also suggest another venue to explain why states do, or fail to, co-operate. Milner, for example, claims that international co-operation — being an outcome of the struggles fought by domestic actors within national institutional frameworks that define power-sharing and the distribution of information among them — is often hard to achieve.[45] The case of Vietnam might, however, suggest that domestic politics could be held constant for several reasons. Vietnam, in a broader sense, has been seen to be more suited to a model in which policies are made by a small body of decision-makers. According to Porter, the Vietnamese system is "bureaucratic", in that the policy-making process is dominated "by a bureaucratic élite" who inherited non-European political traditions, and "countervailing extra-bureaucratic forces are weak or absent".[46] In a lesser sense, if factional struggles are inevitable among any élite, what is unique about Vietnam is the degree to which, among communist-led states, the principle of collective leadership has actually been followed.[47]

Therefore, even though there have been merits in the approach incorporating domestic levels of analysis in the search for a plausible

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theoretical framework, in the case of Vietnam the state is unitary and the effects of domestic politics on international relations can largely be overlooked. Motivations and perceptions of the Vietnamese leadership could be considered homogenous, regardless of their preferences over security, economic welfare, or state identity construction. In other words, the case of Vietnam and ASEAN could still suggest that of a collective response by the leadership to international and domestic pressures. Empirically, while differences may have been detected in the foreign policy decisions that related to the United States and China, a greater consensus seems to be that insofar as relations with ASEAN are concerned, they are less problematic.

Investigating a Most Plausible Hypothesis: Methods and Sources

Methods

"Process tracing" would ideally be the main method for this theoretical exercise. By tracing the actual process of decision-making, this method helps to collect evidence to illustrate the actual thinking of the decision-makers in Hanoi about Vietnam's foreign policy, and differences (or congruencies) between rhetorical statements on, and actual practices of, Vietnamese foreign policy with regard to ASEAN. Process tracing also helps to clarify the questions related to counter-factuals. Therefore, it would help confirm which of the above-mentioned hypotheses suggests the most useful way to study the co-operative behaviour of Vietnam's foreign policy. In other words, a historical inquiry focusing on process and discourse is methodologically central.

Sources

Process tracing depends to a great extent on the availability of sources. Possible sources may include the following:

- *Secondary sources*: published party documents; officials' memoirs; other secondary sources, including books, monographs, newspaper and journal articles.
- *Primary sources*: unpublished documents such as memorandum, political reports, talking points, transcripts of talks, cables sent to or received from Vietnamese embassies abroad, and situation-analyses by foreign ministry officials.
- *Personal interviews*: these are with officials directly involved in Vietnam–ASEAN relations. These officials would be from the Foreign Ministry, the Party's Central Committee Department for External Relations, and the Prime Minister's Office.

As it has been agreed among Vietnam scholars, apart from a strong command of the Vietnamese language and the ability to interpret the

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sources, there have been some problems with regard to access to sources in Vietnam. Firstly, it is hard to gain access to primary sources. They may be found in personal data collection or in files stored in the Foreign Ministry archives and regional departments, Party Central Committee archives, or elsewhere. There is limited access to them, even to Vietnamese researchers. Secondly, documents often have rhetorical expressions and a certain level of vagueness about them. Thirdly, while a number of studies by Vietnamese researchers on the theme of this article have been conducted, the lack of access to non-public sources by scholars, and the tendency of the leadership to use scholarly works to propagandize the efficaciousness of foreign policy have led to a legitimate concern about the practical use of these studies even though it does not mean that they are totally non-substantive.

It seems clear that apart from gathering data, the search for relevant evidence should include comparisons between public records and unpublished documents, and a careful reading of historical events. There should also be efforts at balancing the personal slant taken in sources and the widely accepted historical accounts and analysis. Interviewing officials who were involved in the course of Vietnam–ASEAN relations should be a central focus of this effort. These people could help to interpret the real meaning of documents as well as introduce some of the "behind-the-scenes" events that may not have been documented, in addition to closing some possible gaps between what has been said and done.

Collecting non-public documents and carefully reading them, as well as interviewing relevant officials can also help one to get close to the actual thinking of decision-makers. These will reveal the perceptions and motivations of the leadership, which are essential to confirm or disprove the hypotheses outlined here. For example, concerns over external threats would confirm assumptions about the realist thinking of Vietnamese leaders. Their actual thinking about Vietnam as an ASEAN member-state, about other ASEAN members, and ASEAN as an organization, would determine how leaders in Hanoi have attached importance to Vietnam–ASEAN relations while designing their policy towards ASEAN. This will also show how real "the sense of belonging" to the region is, how important ASEAN is in the overall foreign policy of the country, and what role ASEAN plays in the economic and overall mode of political developments of Vietnam, thus providing important evidence to judge the advantages or disadvantages of the liberal institutionalist or constructivist arguments.

Access to sources, therefore, is essential. Both academic and bureaucratic circles in Vietnam have for nearly two decades engaged in various types of exchanges with their foreign counterparts. These exchanges will be most important for Vietnamese foreign policy

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watchers to have a relatively good opportunity to access various kinds of sources. The continued search for the most plausible theoretical framework for Vietnam–ASEAN co-operation, constitutes, in the final analysis, a more rigorous search for sources that help provide a more detailed story of this relationship from which generalizations may be possible.

NOTES

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The Lessons of Le Kha Phieu: Changing Rules in Vietnamese Politics

ZACHARY ABUZA

At the Vietnam Communist Party's Ninth Congress, General Secretary Le Kha Phieu was voted out of office, heralding an end to the era of the strongman in Vietnamese politics. Phieu made many mistakes, including being politically corrupt, campaigning openly, abusing power, and equivocating on important economic decisions. However, these alone were not enough to unseat him. Phieu's downfall must be explained by systemic changes in the Vietnamese political system, including his status as a compromise candidate with no broad base of support, and the growth of political power of provincial leaders. This article concludes by analysing newly elected leader Nong Duc Manh's ascension to office and finds that he displays none of the personal liabilities that wounded Phieu, and has taken advantage of the changed political environment to give himself a broad base of support and a mandate to lead.

Introduction

In the run-up to the Vietnam Communist Party's (VCP) Ninth Congress, in April 2001, General Secretary Le Kha Phieu lost in his bid to be either re-elected for a full five-year term or, alternatively, be elected to serve out a five-year term and resign at a mid-term congress in 2003. The Central Committee's rejection of Phieu says a lot about the evolution of the Vietnamese political system.

In February 2001, with the economy stagnant, Phieu was under fierce attack. Following the conclusion of the first session of the Eleventh Plenum in February, press reports stated that Phieu was "99

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percent likely to lose his job".[1] A key decision by the Central Committee that no one over the age of 65 would be re-elected at the Congress in order to rejuvenate the leadership seemed to confirm that the 67-year-old Phieu was to be replaced.[2] Yet, Phieu launched a furious counter-attack and soon thereafter, exceptions for the mandatory retirement age were being made for "key cadres".[3] Capitalizing on the wave of violent demonstrations by ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands in February 2001,[4] the General Secretary was able to convince the leadership that with such serious political unrest, the country was not ready for a leadership change. Playing on the leadership's overarching concern for stability, by the end of the second session of the Eleventh Plenum, it seemed that Phieu's job was secure and that he would finish a face-saving full five-year term. In mid-April, two-thirds of the Politburo voted to re-elect Phieu to serve until a mid-term congress in 2003, but at the Twelfth Plenum on 17 April, the full Central Committee overturned the Politburo's decision (in itself a rare event) and voted to oust him.

What did Le Kha Phieu do wrong? Why did he not get re-elected to either a full five-year term, or even a face-saving completion of his five-year term? Is the era of the strongman at an end? Clearly, Phieu had made many mistakes. Years ago, leaders were not punished for poor performance or failed policies, nor were they reprimanded for abusing power. Senior leaders were autonomous and nearly immune from both public and intra-party scrutiny; this is no longer the case. In Phieu's case, however, it was not just self-inflicted wounds that ended his career. We have to look for changes within the Vietnamese political system itself. This is not a static system and the rules have changed.

This article will begin with an analysis of some of the systemic factors that played a role in Phieu's downfall, including his inherent political weaknesses, the growth of provincial power, and economic recession, before addressing Phieu's own mistakes, such as abuse of power, political corruption, and wanton ambition.

Systemic Factors

A Compromise Candidate in a Changing Political Environment

Le Kha Phieu was weak from the start. He began his tenure as General Secretary at mid-term after a protracted leadership dispute, and he was clearly selected through default.[5] He had no broad base of support, but was rather a compromise candidate. He was elected amidst political gridlock and a fierce power struggle that was crippling the Vietnamese leadership. Although the stalemate was partly based on ideology, much was the fault of a Vietnamese political system that strives to artificially

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create a balance in the system and inherently has a degree of gridlock built into it.

Even before the Eighth Congress, in June 1996, the leadership was mired in a political stalemate. None of the ruling troika, General Secretary Do Muoi, President Le Duc Anh, and Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet was willing to voluntarily retire without concurrent moves by the other two. Doing so would have left their less politically skilled protégés weak and vulnerable. Thus, the ruling troika remained in place until the fall of 1998, when President Le Duc Anh and Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet stepped down. General Secretary Do Muoi retired at the Fourth Plenum in December 1997, under intense pressure from the Central Committee who saw him as too ideological and dogmatic to resolve the country's economic crisis.

Le Kha Phieu was elected as Muoi's successor, but he was clearly a compromise candidate as the "political gene pool" in Vietnam is very shallow. Successors to Kiet and Anh were easily found and appointed. For the post of General Secretary, however, there were few "eligible" candidates. If one analyses the eighteen-man roster of the Politburo elected at the mid-term Congress in December 1997, this is evident:

- *Le Kha Phieu*: Head of the Vietnamese People's Army (VPA) General Political Department and member of the Politburo Standing Board. One of two leading candidates for the post of General Secretary.
- *Tran Duc Luong*: Was just elected President at the National Assembly session in September 1997; also a member of the Politburo Standing Board.
- *Phan Van Khai*: Was just elected Prime Minister at the National Assembly session in September 1997; also a member of the Politburo Standing Board.
- *Nong Duc Manh*: Was effectively doing the job as head of the National Assembly; but he belongs to an ethnic minority, and is not an ethnic Vietnamese, which is seen as a liability.
- *Pham Van Tra*: Just assumed the position of Minister of Defence, and was the senior VPA official on the Politburo after Doan Khue's death.
- *Nguyen Manh Cam*: The Minister of Foreign Affairs was weakened politically after his failed bid for the presidency in 1997. He was seen as an uncharismatic figure and did not have a broad base of support.
- *Nguyen Duc Binh*: Though a very powerful figure as head of the top party school, he was seen as being too ideological, and too old for the position.

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- *Nguyen Van An*: Though relatively new to the Politburo, he was the powerful head of the Central Committee's Organization Department, and was one of the front-runners for the position of General Secretary.
- *Nguyen Thi Xuan My*: Had too little experience on the Politburo. As the first woman in the Politburo, her position there had more to do with tokenism then capability.
- *Truong Tan Sang*: He, too, was fairly new to the Politburo, though he was clearly being groomed for bigger things. An advocate of further economic reform, he is mistrusted by party conservatives.
- *Le Xuan Dung*: The Hanoi Party Chief was in ill-health and had been criticized for his handling of the economic downturn in Hanoi.
- *Le Minh Huong*: Was new to the Politburo and ensconced as the Minister of Interior.
- *Pham The Duyet*: Though a long-serving Politburo member, he was often rotated through positions and was not considered to be overly competent. He was at the time the only Politburo member without a portfolio. Though he clearly aspired to the post, he did not have the support needed to be elected General Secretary.
- *Nguyen Tan Dung*: The Deputy Prime Minister was also the Bank of Vietnam Governor, and was clearly being groomed for bigger things. He was young and did not have a lot of experience on the Politburo, though he was on the Politburo Standing Board.
- *Phan Thanh Ngan*: Elected to the Politburo at the Fourth Plenum.
- *Phan Dien*: Elected to the Politburo at the Fourth Plenum.
- *Nguyen Minh Triet*: Elected to the Politburo at the Fourth Plenum.
- *Nguyen Phu Trong*: Elected to the Politburo at the Fourth Plenum.

When one took into consideration their current posts, ideological position, rank, age, and experience on the Politburo, there was only a choice between Nguyen Van An and Le Kha Phieu for the post of General Secretary. In the end, Phieu was able to cobble together more support than An, who himself, was a relative newcomer to the Politburo.[6] Phieu, who was very ambitious, and already running the day-to-day operations of the party in his capacity as the secretary of the Politburo Standing Board, was in a better position and certainly worked hard to win the support of the other members of the Politburo.

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However, the Politburo remained clearly divided along factional lines. Le Kha Phieu attempted to straddle the fence, pleasing neither camp. Phieu was elected more or less by default, not because he had a large base of support or was able to cobble together a coalition of various factions. On the contrary, no faction was able to dominate the carefully and artificially crafted Politburo.

A Broad-Base of Power

Besides being elected by default, Phieu had another inherent weakness, which had more to do with the maturing of the Vietnamese political system. Without a broad base of power, Phieu entered office handicapped. The current generation of leaders, of which Phieu is one, are technocrats with neither broad-based experience nor the resulting patronage networks. Le Kha Phieu, like Prime Minister Phan Van Khai and President Tran Duc Luong, really did not have the authority (and more importantly the patronage networks running through the party, government, and military) that his predecessors possessed.

The Vietnamese political system is based on patron–client ties: the relationship between two or more individuals of unequal rank or stature. In return for support and protection, the client owes his patron unquestioned loyalty and support. Because General Secretary Do Muoi, President Le Duc Anh and Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet came to power during the war years, they all wore a combination of party, military, and government hats. The party-military-government élite at that time was really an élite. There were ideological and strategic differences and personal rivalries to be sure, but it was a small group, who went through a formative period together. And they all had very broad experience. The current leadership, the fourth generation, came of political age during a period of stagnation when their predecessors refused to give up power — most importantly their patronage networks — the *nomenklatura*. They were brought up through the ranks because they were "clients" who never had enough authority or opportunity to really be "patrons" in their own right. What gave Le Duc Anh authority and power as president was not his positional power, in Putnam's terms, but his decisional power.[7] As a senior general and former Minister of Defence, he had vast patronage networks throughout the military. Though constitutionally as powerful as his predecessor, the current President, Tran Duc Luong, has little power over the military that he technically commands because he does not control any of the patronage networks throughout the armed forces. He has never promoted protégés or done anything to ensure unwavering loyalty to him.

Likewise, Phieu had no such base of power. Born in 1932 in Thanh Hoa province, Phieu joined the Communist Party in 1949, and became a

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political officer in the Vietnam People's Army. He served in both the anti-French and anti-American wars, and later as the deputy political commissar of several military regions before becoming the chief political commissar and deputy commander of Vietnam's forces in Cambodia in the mid-1980s. His military career culminated in 1991 when he became head of the VPA's General Political Department, the top communist party official in the military. Lt. Gen. Le Kha Phieu joined the VCP's Central Committee at the Third Plenum in June 1992, and his promotion through the party hierarchy was swift. He became a member of the Central Committee's Secretariat in 1992 and the Politburo in January 1994. He was briefly in charge of internal party security, the only position that put him in a broader political context. At the VCP's Eighth Congress in June 1996, he was elected to the Politburo's Standing Committee, a five-person board that dealt with the day-to-day running of the country.[8] He was elected VCP General Secretary at the Central Committee's Fourth Plenum, on 26 December 1997, a year and a half after the Eighth Party Congress.

Phieu, like his contemporaries, was brought up in "line" as a technocrat — that is, Phieu was just a military political commissar, nothing else. During his entire career, until the end, he was promoted so rapidly that he did not have time to consolidate his power. His predecessors' experience had been wide though not deep. They rotated through different positions across different branches of government, party, and the military during the war years. Do Muoi, for example, served as a labour leader, oversaw the socialization of the south, served in various economic ministries, as Prime Minister, and in various party positions. Nguyen Van Linh served on the Politburo, the Secretariat, as an underground leader in the south during the war, and as Ho Chi Minh City party chief. These long and varied careers introduced them to many people, and power in Vietnam is nothing but personal. The current leadership did not have such a broad experience and it shows. In short, the current top leadership does not have the leverage or personal pull over its colleagues.

Le Kha Phieu was a compromise candidate and came in without patronage or clear support. He was a weak leader who needed to broaden his core constituency beyond the military. Indeed, within the military, his influence was confined to the General Political Department, and it was long reported that he had poor relations with the leaders of the General Staff Department, such as Le Duc Anh and Doan Khue and the nine regional military commanders. Thus, he tried to appeal for the support of both reformers and conservatives. For fear of alienating one group, he tended to sit on the fence, weighing in at the last moment, and tried to build consensus between these disparate factions, endearing himself to neither.

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Poor Performance

Traditionally, the Communist Party relied on its leadership during the long struggle for independence, its victories over the French, Americans, and Chinese, and its successful reunification of the country to legitimize its continued rule and monopoly on power. However, following years of economic malaise, triple-digit inflation, food shortages, resistance to collectivization in the countryside, and diplomatic isolation, the regime began to lose much of its legitimacy. The Party adopted an economic reform programme in 1986 known as *doi moi* that saw the decollectivization of agriculture, the adoption of a quasi-export-led growth strategy of development, the courting of foreign investment, and the breakdown of central planning. As a result of these fundamental reforms, the economy grew at an average annual rate of 8 per cent in the decade between 1986 to 1996. Though still a poor country — Vietnam's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) remained under US$400 — the economy grew each year and, as a result, the population began to expect a certain rate of economic growth. People began to link the regime's legitimacy to economic performance and, importantly, their own standard of living. Political legitimacy was no longer rooted in the national struggle, but in economic growth and poverty eradication.

On top of this, the regime is confronted with an increasingly youthful population: by 1999, more than half the population was under 30 years of age and hence had no recollection of the war or the party's political leadership during that crucial period. With such a young population with greater exposure to the outside world and awareness of Vietnam's relative socio-economic standing, the party's constant attempts to justify its continued rule and hold on power, based on historical grounds, was increasingly untenable.

Yet during Le Kha Phieu's tenure, the economy clearly worsened. A malaise took hold and *doi moi*, which had such wonderful results initially, petered out for both internal and external reasons. Externally, the Asian economic crisis had a devastating effect on the Vietnamese economy as Asian states accounted for 70 per cent of its foreign investment and absorbed 60 per cent of Vietnam's exports, and the country's competitiveness dissolved in the face of the region's devalued currencies. Vietnam did not cope with the crisis well and responded in piecemeal fashion because of a political deadlock and fierce differences on how to proceed, with liberals promising reform while conservatives argued that Vietnam could weather the storm without changing. Indeed, the Central Committee's Fifth Plenum, in July 1998, emphasized the mobilization of US$7 billion in domestic capital to supplant the fall in foreign investment. Conservatives within Vietnam's leadership blamed the Asian economic crisis on capitalism, and believed that Vietnam's lack of integration was a blessing. Reformers blamed the crisis on

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"crony capitalism", imperfect markets and too much government intervention. Since the Eighth Party Congress in 1996, the Politburo has been deadlocked and unable to implement any bold reforms to stimulate the economy.

Because of Hanoi's unwillingness to reform, continued operating losses, and rampant corruption, foreign investors began to flee the country. Of the US$7.9 billion pledged in the peak year of 1996, only 33 per cent was actually disbursed. Foreign investment fell by 60 per cent in 1998, and in 1999, declined by another 64 per cent, to US$1.48 billion from US$4.06 billion in 1998.[9] By all other measurable accounts, the Vietnamese economy was in poor shape.[10] By October 1999, 60–70 per cent of foreign firms reported losses from their Vietnamese operations.[11] The economy was growing too slowly to create jobs for the one million new entrants to the work-force each year, while unemployment, in double-digit figures, was a major problem. Exports declined and the dong became over-valued. The trade deficit was more than US$1 billion in 2000, 150 per cent higher than estimated. The banking sector was in crisis and 46 per cent of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) were in the red, subsidized at huge public expense.[12] Although the economy is currently growing at 4-5 per cent, it is only half the rate of the first half of the 1990s, and barely enough to keep pace with the country's population growth.[13] Unimpressed at the slow pace of reforms, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) held up some US$500 million in loans in 1999 and an additional US$700 million in 2000 until Hanoi agreed to adopt a "more comprehensive approach to reform". The Prime Minister, Phan Van Khai, raised the alarm, but the Politburo, bitterly divided along factional and ideological lines, was unable to come to an agreement on the direction of the reform programme.[14]

There is no consensus on which steps to take: reformers understand that economic growth is contingent on exploiting Vietnam's comparative advantage, joining the global market-place, courting foreign investment, and engaging in trade. Ideological conservatives, such as General Secretary Le Kha Phieu, see these as ways that the First World will continue to exploit Vietnam and keep it poor and underdeveloped. "When imperialism speeds up trade and services liberalization and the globalization of investments", he warned, "the rich countries become richer and the gap between rich and poor countries widens".[15] Conservatives see economic interdependence as the West's tool to undermine the VCP's monopoly on power and reforms, such as privatization of state-owned assets, as a challenge to the authority of the state as well as its ideological underpinnings. Moreover, foreign competition will bankrupt many state-owned enterprises, causing massive unemployment and social unrest.[16]

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The problem was that Phieu provided no leadership in resolving the country's myriad economic woes, equivocating and weighing in at the last moment, and in the end, endearing himself to neither faction.

For example, in the midst of this debate and the continuing economic downturn, the Politburo rejected a draft bilateral trade agreement (BTA) with the United States that would have seen average U.S. tariffs on Vietnamese goods fall from 40 per cent to 3 per cent — a deal that the World Bank estimated to be worth US$800 million in exports to the United States in the first year of the agreement alone.[17] While Phieu favoured the agreement, his leadership during the debate endeared him to no one. On the one hand, Phieu understood the importance of exports to the Vietnamese economy and the need to penetrate new markets, especially during the Asian economic crisis. Yet, he was more concerned about the market access and "national treatment" provisions of the BTA, which would give foreign firms the same rights and privileges, and end subsidies and protection to domestic firms. In the end, Phieu voted for the agreement, but only after ten months of fierce debates and concessions to interest groups, especially the military and the Ministry of the Interior. With the exception of the telecommunications sector, which received increased protection, the final agreement included many more concessions by the Vietnamese. Throughout the process, Phieu angered reformers by not forcing fellow conservatives to support the agreement, and for the further concessions that Vietnam had to make to conclude the agreement. He angered ideological conservatives, who saw the agreement as a threat to the state-owned sector.

Phieu also equivocated on the issue of SOE reform and privatization. Under Phieu, there was a minimal commitment to the privatization of SOEs. At the time of his appointment, Le Kha Phieu asserted that: "We understand that the way ahead is full of thorns so we have no choice other than continuing the acceleration of the *doi moi* course in a comprehensive and concerted way in the orientation to socialism if we want to bring our country further forward".[18] Though inefficient, the 6,000 SOEs are the cornerstone of the socialist economy, despite the fact that between one-third to one-half operate in the red. Many in the leadership, including Phieu, cannot fathom any policy that would limit subsidies to SOEs, or subject them to increased foreign competition because unemployment rates in Vietnam are already more than 10 per cent, and by April 1998, more than 8 per cent of the 1.8 million SOE employees had been laid off.[19] In addition, at current population growth rates, Vietnam needs nearly one million new jobs per year.[20] Some reform-minded leaders want to scrap the inefficient SOE system and free up the private sector. For example, former Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet, in a controversial October 1995 letter to the

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Politburo, called for the "elimination of any form of business by state-sponsored civil organizations, the party, or armed forces", and urged a greater economic role for private enterprise. Phan Van Khai, likewise, bluntly stated that, "We cannot continue the policy of using state budget and revenues to subsidize loss-making enterprise [*sic*], it is causing a big burden".[21] Conservatives believe that the collapse of the SOE system will lead to mass unemployment and political unrest. The SOE system is at the heart of the regime's legitimacy and must be defended at all costs. Conservatives have focused their efforts on making the SOEs efficient, even profitable.

In sum, Phieu was unable to bridge the gap between the conservative and liberal positions and form a consensual policy. Phieu tended to sit on the fence, only weighing in at the last minute. He tried to be all things to all people. Yet, to the liberals, his unwillingness to reform the SOEs and his dogmatic ideological stance in the midst of economic doldrums branded him a conservative, while conservatives saw his support for the BTA as a rejection of core ideological values. In the context of a regime that has squandered so much of its legitimacy performance, Phieu's lack of leadership and vision was unacceptable and, for this, provincial leaders who were forced to confront the realities of the economic downturn punished him at the Ninth Congress.

The Growth of Provincial Power

Being a one-party state, it was not the masses who rose up or voiced their displeasure at Phieu's handling of the economy, and his fence-sitting, but rather the provincial party leaders. This was clearly seen at the Twelfth Plenum, in April 2001, when the full Central Committee voted to overturn the Politburo's decision and unseat Phieu. This is the manifestation of a gradual change in Vietnamese politics: decentralization and the growth of provincial power *vis-à-vis* the centre.

When the country was reunified in 1976, it was very decentralized: there were some seventy provinces, the country was divided into war zones, and basic infrastructure was devastated, making co-ordination and policy implementation difficult. In 1976, there was an attempt to centralize. The number of administrative units (provinces and centrally-led municipalities) was reduced to thirty-eight. The party hoped that a smaller number of larger units would be easier for the centre to control and implement policy. Yet, the economy worsened and by 1986 was near collapse, bankrupted by the war in Cambodia, racked by triple-digit inflation, declining agricultural output, and chronic trade and budget deficits. Nguyen Van Linh and the new party leadership, elected

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at the Eighth Party Congress in December 1986, apportioned much of the blame for the dismal state of the economy to over-centralization — too much bureaucracy, and not enough concern for regional variations and circumstances, and too much central planning. Linh then sought to decentralize power, for both economic reasons and political ones. As he confronted a recalcitrant bureaucracy that did not want to consider his reforms that would strip them of much of their allocative power, Linh began to appeal to provincial leaders and work outside the central VCP apparatus. *Doi moi* was a boon for the provinces. Although Linh did not "play to the provinces" to the extent that Deng Xiaoping did in China,[22] he went to great efforts throughout 1986-87 to replace the central leadership with more reformist officials from the provinces, and then further won their support by divesting some central authority to the locales.[23] Stern argues that "Linh's appeal for a wider use of extra-party entities and his support for increased representation for local-level party bodies in setting the individual reformist agendas, were singularly unpopular with a central committee that was intent upon strengthening tried and true chains of command".[24]

Provincial power and autonomy grew substantially throughout the early 1990s, to a degree that alarmed the party, both reformers and conservatives. Between 1976 and 1990, there was only a net increase of two provinces. The forty provinces were very large and autonomous. Economic reform had made many of them less dependent on transfer payments from the centre. Indeed, many were so economically successful that they were now resisting paying taxes to the centre, that would be used to subsidize other provinces. The mid- to late-1990s saw a series of contests between the centre and the provinces that were increasingly unwilling to give up their newfound power. For example, then Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet confronted fierce resistance from the provinces when the central government attempted to gain control over provincial-level appointments and sackings. In the end, the centre could not wrest this authority away from the provinces and had to settle for a compromise two-term limit for provincial leaders.

This assertion of authority alarmed the leadership, who oversaw the breakdown of many provinces into smaller units. Between 1990 and 2000, there was a 52.5 per cent increase in the number of administrative units, from forty to sixty-one. With the economic slowdown at the end of the 1990s, provinces again began to assert themselves in an attempt to rekindle the economic reform programme and grow their economies.

Provinces not only had more clout because of their economic strength but they had political clout as well. Since *doi moi* was implemented, the composition of the Central Committee has shifted away from centre-level officials to provincial leaders (see Table 1), and the

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result of this shift in the balance of power has been profound. As David Elliott has noted: "Expansion in the number of province party leaders in the face of retrenchment everywhere else is a confirmation of the fact that power in Vietnam is increasingly devolving into what used to be called in China 'independent kingdoms'."[25] At the Fifth Party Congress in 1982, provincial officials had represented only 15.6 per cent of the Central Committee. With Nguyen Van Linh's election to the post of General Secretary, at the Sixth Congress in December 1986 there was a 50 per cent increase, to 23.7 per cent. At the Seventh Congress, in June 1991, the number of provincial delegates hit 52, or 35.6 per cent of the total. The provincial share of seats dropped slightly to 31.2 per cent at the Eighth Congress; but for the first time, regional officials, Truong Tan Sang and Le Xuan Tung, the party leaders of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, respectively, were elected to the Politburo.[26] The Central Committee, elected at the Ninth Congress, was dominated by provincial leaders. Currently, fifty-six of sixty-one provinces and municipalities are represented, and 41 per cent of the Central Committee members are secondary or provincial cadres.[27]

What this increase in the number of provincial delegates meant for Le Kha Phieu was considerable opposition to his tenure. There has always been a correlation between high percentages of provincial leaders in the Central Committee and economic reform and growth. It is the provincial leaders who feel the pinch when the economy slows. While the provinces lose foreign investment and export revenues, and not the central government, their transfer payments and revenue transfers to the central government do not necessarily change, thereby increasing their fiscal burden.

Table 1
Provincial Representation in the Central Committee

Congress	*No. of Provincial Officials in CC*	*No. of CC Members*	*Percentage of the Central Committee*
5th (1982)	24	154	15.6%
6th (1986)	41	173	23.7%
7th (1991)	52 (47)	146	35.6% (32.2%)
8th (1996)	53	170	31.2%
9th (2001)	56	150	41%

Often, the provinces are frustrated with Hanoi and either ignore or circumvent official policy. For example, many southern officials feel that the more ideological north and its majority in the party leadership

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holds the country back. Hanoi's ideological rigidity and social conservatism infuriate the more freewheeling capitalist south, which believes that politics has interfered greatly with economic development. In May 2000, so frustrated was Ho Chi Minh City over the red tape in Hanoi, which it felt was driving foreign investors out of the country, that it announced it would unilaterally approve foreign investments if the approval process in Hanoi took more than two weeks.[28]

How did all this affect Le Kha Phieu? Let us revisit what happened in the run-up to the Ninth Congress. As mentioned above, in January and February 2001, with the economy stagnant, he was under fierce attack, and the press reported that Phieu was "99 percent likely to lose his job". Yet, capitalizing on the wave of unrest in the Central Highlands, Phieu was able to play on the leadership's overarching concern for stability and convince it that the time was not ripe for a leadership change. Following the conclusion of the second session of the Eleventh Plenum, it looked like Phieu's job was secure, and in the days before the Twelfth Plenum, two-thirds of the Politburo voted to re-elect Phieu to serve until a mid-term congress in 2003. However, at the Twelfth Plenum, days before the Ninth Congress was to begin, the full Central Committee rejected the Politburo's decision and voted to oust him. Phieu could not even garner 50 per cent of the votes from the 170 Central Committee delegates. With 31 per cent of the Committee comprised of provincial leaders who were steadfastly against Phieu, it was easy to get an additional 20 per cent of the remaining members to vote against the General Secretary.

Clearly, the provincial leaders had felt the pinch from the 5–6 years of economic slowdown, were cognizant that the status quo would lead to a continued economic malaise, and that without a change in leadership there would be no policy innovations. Once quiescent and dutifully following the centre's line, provincial leaders were now far more assertive and willing to advocate on behalf of their constituencies.

There are two flaws in this analysis. First, most of the provincial leaders serving on the Eighth Central Committee themselves lost their seats at the Ninth Congress. There was a massive turnover in the provincial-level leadership. Nonetheless, the outgoing provincial leaders and their replacements did appear to push for a change in the national-level leadership. Secondly, it overstates the reformist nature of provincial leaders. One must be careful not to assume that all provincial leaders are reformist, as this type of analysis tends to do. Clearly, many provincial leaders have hesitated in implementing meaningful market reforms, and there are huge socio-economic gaps among the sixty-one provinces and administrative units. Yet, ideology aside, whether provincial leaders are reformist or more ideologically conservative, one

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must understand that provincial leaders act in their provincial interests first, as they have to appeal to their constituency — their base of support.

Self-Inflicted Wounds

Ambition

Whereas there have been structural changes in the Vietnamese polity that go to understanding Phieu's downfall, much of it can be explained in terms of self-inflicted wounds. These include corruption, and failures in foreign policy. However, no explanation is more important than Phieu's ambition. Le Kha Phieu was an inordinately ambitious man. He actively campaigned for re-election to a degree that has never been seen in Vietnam. This in itself is not a bad thing, but how he tried to consolidate power really ran against the grain of the Vietnamese political system.

First, there were widespread reports that Phieu tried to consolidate his power even more by changing Communist Party statutes so that he could concurrently assume the position of President and party General Secretary.[29] Both the General Secretaries of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, and the Chinese Communist Party, Jiang Zemin, did this so that they could assume a more high-profile international position. It seems that Phieu had similar intentions and by many press accounts, he was infuriated during an official visit to France in May 2000 when he was not treated as a head of state. There was another incident when a foreign diplomat was summoned to Phieu's office and reprimanded for going to the Prime Minister to complain about deteriorating investment conditions. "It is me who makes decisions", shouted Phieu. Again, though the General Secretary is *primus inter pares*, there is a tradition of collective leadership and power sharing in Vietnam.

There were reports that opponents to Phieu tried to thwart his ambition by proposing to abolish the post of President altogether, but this was seen as too disruptive, and quickly abandoned. Efforts were then made to thwart Phieu's unpopular attempt to consolidate power. As the VCP has always prided itself on collective leadership, any attempt by one individual to overtly consolidate power is seen as "anti-democratic" behaviour and eschewed.[30] As a spokesman for the Central Committee diplomatically explained, "In our experience we don't want one cadre to take both responsibilities to avoid confusion between the leading function and the managerial function."[31]

The second mistake Phieu made in his efforts to shore up his power was his attempt to abolish the position of Advisors to the Central

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Committee, which were occupied by the former General Secretary Do Muoi, the former President Le Duc Anh, and the former Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet.

Tensions between the General Secretary and the senior statesmen who had appointed him were rife as they continued to intervene in key decisions. Do Muoi often weighed in on issues, notably during the Thai Binh peasant unrest in early 1998. Muoi was also an outspoken critic of the BTA, which he felt gave too much to the Americans and would leave Vietnamese firms vulnerable to competition by American companies. Le Duc Anh was not as vocal in his dealings with Phieu, but they traditionally shared poor relations going back to their days in Cambodia, when Phieu was the political commissar of Vietnamese troops, ostensibly the number two person behind Anh, though Anh and his protégé and chief-of-staff, Doan Khue, often clashed with Phieu. Vo Van Kiet was under fierce attack by ideological conservatives who circulated a seventeen-page unsigned and undated letter addressed to Le Kha Phieu, Do Muoi, and Le Duc Anh. The letter warned of factionalism and corruption, and lamented the party's loss of credibility, reiterating fears of peaceful evolution and CIA-sponsored attempts to undermine the leadership of the country, and put all the blame for the country's problems on the reformers.[32] Yet Kiet remained a powerful figure and the patron of reformist leaders who were critical of Phieu.

For many reasons, Phieu wanted these positions abolished in order to give him a freer hand in policy-making. Did Phieu think that he could simply convince delegates to the Ninth Congress to eliminate the position?

Phieu's mistake was not that he underestimated their continued influence and power, but that they could act in concert. Muoi, Anh and Kiet were never on the same ideological plane. However, clearly when the three decided that Phieu had to go, the General Secretary had no idea that all three would work concertedly to unseat him.

Ironically, once Phieu was unseated, the new General Secretary, Nong Duc Manh, made the abolition of the post one of his key conditions for accepting the position.[33] Very clearly, Manh did not want party elders weighing in on policy issues, as had been the case with Phieu. Moreover, although Phieu fought to abolish the position, once it was clear that he was not going to be re-elected, he fought to be appointed "advisor". Manh would have none of it and demanded that Phieu would have no such advisory role.

Regarding their influence behind the scenes before and during the Congress, Kiet was blunt: "We found that the proposed party Central Committee for this congress was even higher than for the last

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congress, so we proposed that the average age of the Central Committee of the new congress must be younger or certainly no higher than the last congress".[34] The letter that the three circulated explicitly accused Phieu of "failings in party and state management". "It is a perfectly normal part of our work for one, two, or even all three advisors to contact party members or write letters to the politburo, that is normal", stated Kiet.

Phieu was guilty of naked political ambition. His overt campaigning for the job did not sit well with many in the party, but when he tried to further consolidate his power by concurrently serving as the state President and by eliminating the power and influence of party elders who often interfered and served as a check on Phieu, he angered many. It was not simply his ambition that resulted in his sacking, but the extent to which he sought to achieve his personal political goals.

Corruption

One of the leitmotifs of Le Kha Phieu's tenure was anti-corruption and party rejuvenation. Phieu was truly appalled by the degree of corruption within the country, and in particular within the Communist Party. Phieu argued that such endemic corruption was the root cause of the VCP's loss of both legitimacy and the people's faith in the party's leadership. As Huu Tho, the head of the Central Committee's Ideology and Culture Commission admitted: "The Party Central Committee showed great interest in the deprivation in living styles of a part of our cadres and party members", as such practices "will be harmful to economic development and will make us lose the trust [of] the people".[35]

Indeed, corruption is endemic in Vietnam, ranked by PERC as the most corrupt country in Asia in 2000, with a score of 9.75 out of 10. Corruption pervades almost every aspect of life in Vietnam. Recent VCP reports stated that there was evidence of corruption in 43 per cent of the party cells inspected; and in the past five years, 1 per cent of party members had been disciplined. In 1999, the Ministry of Finance reported that it was unable to account for US$6 billion, or nearly one-third, of all state assets.[36]

At the Sixth Plenum in May 1999, Phieu launched a two-year regeneration drive to purge the Communist Party of corrupt cadres and reinvigorate the party with collective ideals. Soon after the campaign began, in July 1999, the party had expelled 200 members and disciplined 1,550. By November 1999, the courts had heard 526 cases of graft involving 1,100 government officials and businessmen in the first nine months of 1999 alone, while 1,500 local and provincial officials were purged in the year after launching the anti-corruption drive in May 1999. In March 2001, two provincial party chiefs were sacked, but

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for the most part, very few senior level cadres were disciplined, the majority being lower level party officials. Despite these high profile campaigns and daily attacks on corruption in the official press, corruption continued unabated and public perceptions of the VCP continued to worsen, most people believing that the party was the leading culprit if not the root cause of corruption in society.

Phieu, personally, did have a very clean image. He was never publicly identified with graft and by all accounts he lived a modest lifestyle. Unlike most leaders, there were also no corruption scandals or nepotism allegations involving his family. Many family members of leaders have been able to capitalize on their fathers' positions for personal financial gain.

However, whereas Phieu had a clean reputation in terms of never using his position for personal financial gain, he was notorious for political corruption. He did this in two ways. First, he stacked the leadership with cadres from his native province of Thanh Hoa. Every time a leadership position became vacant, Phieu pressed for the appointment of someone from Thanh Hoa. For instance, when Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nguyen Manh Cam retired, most expected that his widely respected and very competent top aide, Deputy Foreign Minister Vu Khoan would succeed him, yet the aging Nguyen Dy Nien, a Thanh Hoa native, was appointed instead. Thanh Hoa natives were also promoted to the posts of Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and Deputy Minister of the Interior. However, there were limits to Phieu's promotion of Thanh Hoa cronies. For example, while he could orchestrate Nien's assumption as Foreign Minister, he could not get Nien elected to the Politburo, and the Foreign Ministry has been unrepresented in the Politburo since January 2000.

The second instance of political corruption, and one that Phieu was explicitly criticized for, was his use of a military intelligence unit to spy on his Politburo colleagues. Through wiretaps, Phieu was trying to find out how the members of the Politburo were going to vote and also to investigate their lifestyles. Though it is not clear what Phieu intended to do with such information, one can surmise that he wanted to use political pressure or launch smear campaigns on those who were going to vote against him. Phieu was explicitly reprimanded for using the security agencies for personal gain. As one of the advisors to the Central Committee, Vo Van Kiet, stated: "My comment is that it is definitely forbidden for anyone, not excluding anyone, to use the [intelligence] apparatus for private purposes. It is wrong, it is a mistake."[37] Kiet made it clear that: "Any person among our leadership detected committing such violations will receive opinions and be criticized immediately. It is forbidden to do that."

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As a result of the phone-tapping revelation, which Phieu never explicitly denied, two of Phieu's closest allies in the military, Minister of Defence Pham Van Tra and Chief of the General Staff Department Le Van Dung received the highest reprimands the party can give, at the Eleventh Plenum's second session, in the run up to the Ninth Congress. Citing "management shortcomings", even Phieu supported the reprimands of his protégés. Both men were scapegoats for Phieu who had hoped that their censure would appease his detractors and not jeopardize his bid for re-election.[38]

In the end, Phieu's abuse of power, use of the country's security services for his own political gain, and political cronyism to further his own political ambitions were too much for the party to countenance. This was manifested at the Ninth Congress. Only five provinces (out of sixty-one) are not represented on the Central Committee, of which Thanh Hoa is one. The head of Military Region 4, which includes Thanh Hoa, is no longer a member of the Central Committee. Le Kha Phieu's protégé and successor as Head of the General Political Department was unexpectedly eased out of the Politburo, while the military's representation in general went from 4 of 18 seats, to 2 of 15 seats on the ruling body. However, the military's representation on the Central Committee, as a percentage of the total actually increased slightly from 8.3 to 9.3 per cent. Moreover, Pham Van Tra kept his Politburo seat (although two ranks lower), and Le Van Dung not only remained head of the VPA's General Staff Department but was also appointed to the party Secretariat. There are only two explanations for their continued appointments despite the severity of the reprimands they received prior to the Congress: the lack of suitably trained successors and the fact that most of the leadership was cognizant that their reprimands were taken on behalf of their political patron.

Sleeping with the Chinese

One of the most widespread criticisms of Phieu came from both sides of the political spectrum over his foreign policy orientation. Phieu was criticized for not implementing a balanced, or what the Vietnamese term an "omni-directional", foreign policy,[39] and in particular of leaning too much towards China, thereby compromising Vietnam's independence.

Vietnam's China policy is very complex. On the one hand, China is a fraternal socialist state, an ideological comrade, and a model for political and economic reform. On the other hand, China is a country that has several thousand years of history of dominating Vietnam, leaving a legacy of mistrust and antipathy. Despite ideological solidarity, China poses a serious threat to Vietnam's territorial integrity

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and the tortuously slow negotiations to resolve the numerous territorial disputes between the two countries, along their land border, the Gulf of Tonkin, and the South China Sea (in particular, the Paracel and Spratly island chains) have reinforced Hanoi's suspicion of China's intentions towards Vietnam and Southeast Asia in general.

In order to manage this complex relationship, Vietnam has adopted a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, it has reinforced ideological and historical ties with China, citing fraternal socialist identity and the dilemmas that both countries have faced as they try to justify continued communist rule concurrent with market reforms and the decline of the ideological basis of their rule. On the other hand, Vietnam has striven not to become dominated by China, and it has adopted an "omni-directional" foreign policy that seeks to balance the historical ties with China. In 1995, Vietnam joined ASEAN in large part to "balance" against China. Although ASEAN is not a formal alliance, Vietnam believes that China deems relations with ASEAN too important for its own development to risk a confrontational policy against one of its members. In short, there would be a "trans-ASEAN" cost that would moderate China's Vietnam policy.[40] Likewise, Vietnam has tried to improve ties with other states, including Russia, Japan, India, and the European Union.

Le Kha Phieu upset this careful diplomatic balance and clearly put much more emphasis on maintaining ties with China. On the one hand, there was an economic rationale for his behaviour. Vietnam was clearly interested in learning from the Chinese reform experience, especially regarding the role of the private sector, and reforming or privatizing state-owned enterprises (SOEs). This could be seen in the number of visits of Vietnamese leaders to China, including a very high profile delegation led by the Politburo's top ideologue Nguyen Duc Binh.[42] On the other hand, Phieu truly seemed more comfortable in dealing with China and believed that closer ties with China would help resolve their longstanding territorial and other bilateral disputes.

Phieu came under attack for this, because most Vietnamese policy-makers do not believe that China will ever reward Vietnam for its quiescence and deference. In their eyes, for Beijing, such behaviour is simply expected of a former vassal state.[42] Yet, Phieu went out of his way to defer to China's concerns and, to many in the government, to such a degree that Vietnam's sovereignty seemed to be in doubt. There are many examples of this.

In the days before U.S. Secretary of Defence William Cohen's long delayed trip to Vietnam, in February 2000, Phieu made an unannounced trip to Beijing to meet with the Chinese leadership to provide assurance that Cohen's visit was in no way directed at China and that

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Vietnam was not seeking to join in Washington's "containment" of China. Likewise, one of the explanations of the Vietnamese Politburo's ten-month delay in approving the BTA was said to be Phieu's concern about offending China. China was at the time at an impasse with the United States in its negotiations over membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), and Phieu did not want to one-up Beijing.[43]

Phieu also came under intense criticism for intervening in the negotiations over the demarcation of the oil-rich Gulf of Tonkin. At a summit in Beijing in 2001, Phieu gave in to Chinese pressure and acceded to the Chinese demarcation. He did this without the prior approval of either the Politburo, Central Committee, or even the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had been conducting the negotiations up to that date. For most in the Vietnamese leadership, Phieu's unauthorized actions amounted to a sell-out of Vietnam's sovereignty and territorial integrity, a treasonous act. If nothing else, the fact that he made the agreement without prior authority or approval from the Politburo, Central Committee, or National Assembly, the leading organs of the party and state, suggested that Phieu believed himself to be above these institutions, able to act independently, free from the constraints of collective leadership, which was historically the *modus operendi* of Vietnamese politics.

During this trip to China, Phieu also signed a long-term co-operation agreement that was very pro-China and explicitly anti-American. On most international issues, in particular the tumultuous bilateral relationship between the United States and China, Vietnam has tended to side with China and be opposed to the American position.

It did not help Phieu when the Chinese actively lobbied for his reappointment, and it did not go unnoticed at the Ninth Congress, when Phieu sat beside Hu Jintao, a senior Chinese leader and likely to be the next General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, who headed the Chinese delegation to the Congress.

Phieu was also roundly criticized for his behaviour during President Clinton's historic visit to Vietnam in November 2000. Clinton, who was the first American President to visit since the reunification of the country, was upbraided by Phieu, who proceeded to give Clinton a 45-minute lecture on American imperialism, Vietnam's victory over the United States, and the triumphs of socialism. That Phieu would take such an occasion, in the midst of an economic downturn and when the BTA needed to be concluded, to dwell on the past, led many in Vietnam to believe that Phieu was simply out of touch with reality.

Phieu likewise blamed the Americans for the rioting of ethnic minorities in the central highlands in February 2000, which was ostensibly over the allocation of land, corruption, the influx of ethnic

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Vietnamese coffee-growers, and the loss of land for traditional slash-and-burn agriculture. Though the United States did accept many of the leaders of the demonstrations as political refugees, following their escape to Cambodia, the U.S. government was in no way involved in provoking the demonstrations. However, that Phieu and others in the leadership explicitly blamed the United States was indicative of the regime's continued reliance on foreign scapegoats rather than confronting the reality that so much popular discontent was the result of their own policies and corruption within the VCP's own ranks.

The *Draft Political Report* that was circulated before the Ninth Congress emphasized that Vietnam's foreign policy orientation would remain focused on socialist and neighbouring states. This angered many within the party leadership who wanted a clearer statement about an omni-directional foreign policy outlook to reflect the reform process. Phieu, who was in charge of the document's drafting, was criticized for adopting a very antiquated foreign policy. ASEAN, too, was upset at the curt mention that was given to it, especially as Vietnam was the rotating president of the organization.

Conclusion

Although a resolution was passed in the Central Committee's Eleventh Plenum in January 2001 that called for an age limit of 65 for all appointments at the Ninth Congress in an attempt to rejuvenate the leadership, an exception was made for "key cadres".[44] Phieu lobbied hard for his re-appointment, to an unprecedented degree in Vietnamese politics. Yet, Phieu was unceremoniously dumped from the post of General Secretary of the VCP after completing only three years of a five-year term. He was not even offered the face-saving post of Advisor to the Central Committee, which was abolished in order to deny him a platform from which he could continue to involve himself in policy-making.

This article has sought to analyse both what Phieu did wrong and what systemic changes in the Vietnamese political system accounted for his dismissal. Very clearly, the rules of Vietnamese politics are changing, and leaders are more than ever before being held accountable for their performance in office, and from different quarters.

On the one hand, many of Phieu's wounds were self-inflicted. His ambition, overt campaigning for the job, attempt to grab even more power by concurrently assuming the presidency, his abuse of power, use of security forces for his own political gain, and cronyism, did not sit well in a country whose political culture favours collective leadership, and shuns overt individual political competition. Constrained by ideology, Phieu equivocated on key economic decisions, causing an

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economic slowdown, from which the country has yet to recover fully, while he abandoned the country's carefully nurtured foreign policy in favour of a pro-China line.

On the other hand, there are systemic changes in the Vietnamese political system that led to Phieu's downfall. The fact is that the Vietnamese political system does not allow for a varied group of talented individuals to make it to the top. The "political gene pool" is very small because people are promoted on the basis of their loyalty to the party rather than their innovative thinking. Thus, when it comes to making a leadership decision, often there is not much of a choice. Secondly, having a broad base of power is important for any top leader. Phieu's core constituency remained the military, which, in turn was punished at the congress for siding with an individual rather than the collective interest of the party. Thirdly, political power has steadily devolved to the provinces, and provincial leaders now dominate the VCP's Central Committee. Angered by the economic malaise, provincial delegates were willing to punish central-level leaders for poor performance.

After analysing Phieu's mistakes and shortcomings, perhaps in conclusion a brief analysis of the likely performance of his successor, Nong Duc Manh, should be provided. Manh has never been blinded by ambition, which was evident in the process of his selection. He turned down the position of General Secretary when it was first offered to him at the Twelfth Plenum. Only when the party leadership came back to him, did he reluctantly accept it. He certainly did not campaign for the post, nor did he abuse his power for personal gain.

Manh has a broad base of power. He has headed the National Assembly since 1992. He was in that high-profile position for more than nine years, a period of time long enough for him to become well known to both provincial and central-level leaders. That position put him in constant contact with both the party's grassroots and senior leadership. He has the support of reformers because he contributed greatly to the reform process, and in particular was committed to turning Vietnam into a law-governed society. Under his leadership, the National Assembly has evolved rapidly from a rubber-stamp for all party decisions to an active law-making forum where policy is heatedly debated and to which the government is increasingly accountable. Under Manh, popular reforms, such as the live broadcast of Assembly proceedings, have increased transparency in decision-making. Yet, to conservatives, Manh is a loyal party man who ensures that National Assembly proceedings never get out of control and that decisions never go against the party's interests.

Manh was a strong candidate to become VCP Secretary General at the Eighth Congress in 1996 and he has continued to quietly attract

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supporters. He has a reputation as a consensus-builder, though he is committed to economic reform and is not hampered by ideology. Moreover, he won a near unanimity of votes, giving him a clear mandate from all factions and interest groups within the party. He has a very strong mandate to reform both the economic and administrative systems. At age 55, he is the country's youngest leader, which helps in the party's desire to rejuvenate itself, so as to be more in touch with the country's youthful population.

Manh has a clean image. Not only has he never been tainted by corruption allegations, but he is also reportedly very strict with his family members, preventing them from entering either politics or business where they could capitalize on his position.

In sum, many of the systemic factors that weakened Phieu have been overcome by Manh. Likewise, Manh, in his ascension, has displayed none of the narcissistic characteristics of his predecessor. In some ways, his power is more steeped in Vietnamese political culture. He has a mandate, the rumours of his parentage give him an aura of mystery, he is morally upright, and has a broad base of support; yet he still operates in the context of collective leadership. The rules of Vietnamese politics have changed, yet they somehow remain the same.

NOTES

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3. "Vietnam Number One in Fightback as Party Sets Date for Congress", Associated Press (AP), Agence France Press (AFP), 24 March 2001. As a senior party spokesman said, "As we discuss the age limit it's important that we not be too rigid".
4. Margot Cohen, "Thunder from the Highlands", *Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER)*, 1 March 2001, pp. 24–25; and David Sands, "Leaders Struggling to Quell Highlands Unrest", *Washington Times*, 13 February 2001.
5. Zachary Abuza, "The Unfinished Congress: Leadership Transition in Vietnam Since the 8th Party Congress", *Asian Survey* (December 1998), pp. 1105–21.
6. Ibid., pp. 1115–17.
7. Robert Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Putnam Hall, 1976), pp. 15–19.

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8. At the Eighth Party Congress, the Secretariat was disbanded as there was a significant degree of overlap in its membership with the Politburo. In its place, a five-member Standing Board on the Politburo was established. This arrangement proved to be unworkable, and after a five-year experiment, the Secretariat was revived at the Ninth Congress in 2001.
9. "Foreign Investors Shun Vietnam in Early 2000", Reuters, 1 March 2000.
10. Ari Kokko, "Vietnam: Ready for Doi Moi II?" *ASEAN Economic Bulletin* 15 no. 3 (December 1998): 319–27.
11. "Majority of Foreign Firms Report Losses in Vietnam", Reuters, 13 October 1999.
12. "Vietnam Finally Set to Move on Billion-Dollar Reform of State Banks", AFP, 4 July 2000.
13. "World Bank President to Push Vietnam on Economic Reform", AFP, 20 February 2000. See also, World Bank, *Vietnam: Ready for Takeoff?* (Washington, D.C., December 1999).
14. "Vietnamese PM Paints Grim Picture of Economic Prospects", AFP, 18 November 1999.
15. Cited in Associated Press, "Vietnam Party Lambasts Imperialism", 2 February 2000.
16. Peasants began to protest against the appropriation of land by corrupt local officials for themselves, families and friends, and the imposition of arbitrary fees and taxes from land usage to "teacher fees" for their children's schooling, to corvee — an amount that one Vietnamese researcher calculated reached a total of 40 per cent of a peasant's income. Peasants, on a nationwide average, must contribute 10 days of labour annually to the state. In all, the total amount of taxes and levies collected between January 1994 and July 1997 was more than 176 billion dong (about $16 million) more than had been authorized by the central government. At the same time, loans to local farmers and businesses in the province fell by 40 per cent compared with 1996, and unemployment was skyrocketing. Although the protests were quelled after dispatching 1,200 police and several Politburo members, that the VCP's traditional base of support even began to challenge the state caused grave consternation among the élite. For background information on the protests, see Dang Phong, "Aspects of Agricultural Economy and Rural Life in 1993", in *Vietnam's Rural Transformation*, edited by Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, and Doug J. Porter (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 182–83. A 1996 Oxfam study found in one province eight types of taxed imposed by the central government, including land use rights, fishing, salt-making, and slaughter, as well as six other local "contributions", including corvee. See Oxfam UK and Ireland, *Report on the Financing and Delivery of Basic Services at the Commune Level in Ky Anh, Ha Tin* (March 1996).
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20. Kokko, op. cit., p. 325.
21. Vo Van Kiet, "Industrialization and Modernization", *Thoi Bao Kinh Te Viet Nam*, 22 May 1996, p. 1, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (hereafter FBIS), *East Asia-Daily Reports* (hereafter *EAS-DR*), 19 July 1996, pp. 57–58; AFP, "Vietnamese PM Paints Grim Picture of Economic Prospects", 18 November 1999; and Ha Thang. "'Frank Words' at the Assembly", *Vietnam Investment Review*, 22–28 November 1999, p. 1.
22. See Susan Shirk, *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
23. For more on Linh's strategy, see Lewis M. Stern, *Renovating the Vietnamese Communist Party* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

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24. Ibid., p. 39.
25. David Elliott, "Vietnam's 1991 Party Elections", *Asian Affairs* 19 (Fall 1992): 161.
26. Though Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City party chiefs now seem to be a regular fixture on the Politburo, there has never been a provincial party chief on the party's ruling body. This is probably because the party is concerned that regional party leaders are already too powerful, in their own right.
27. Although the largest percentage (47 per cent) of those who were dropped from the Eighth Central Committee were provincial leaders — a very high turnover rate — for them it was simply turnover, and not an overall loss of seats.
28. AFP, "Vietnam's Commercial Capital to Take on Hanoi over Red Tape", 8 May 2000.
29. Reuters, 27 June 2000.
30. Only once before had one person held both positions, and that was only temporary. Following General Secretary Le Duan's death in July 1986, President Truong Chinh assumed his post until the Ninth Party Congress convened that December.
31. "Vietnam Communist Party Wants Fewer, Younger Leaders", Reuters, 16 January 2001.
32. The letter, signed by "party veterans", complained that Kiet left the SOEs "half-dead", and decried promotions based on merit over party rank. In terms of corruption, the letter quoted former General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh as saying, "If you want to fight against corruption, you have to start from Kiet's family".
33. Denying that this had been Manh's precondition, Kiet stated that "I myself will be stepping down because of my years and because I am past retirement age". "We advisors could not have any pressure whatsoever whether we will continue or not". AFP, "Vietnam Kingmaker Denies Coming Under Pressure to Stand Down", 21 April 2001.
34. Ibid.
35. Andy Solomon, "Vietnam Says Corruption Causes Loss of Trust", Reuters, 16 July 1998.
36. Huw Watkin, "Death Sentence Fails to Inspire Financial-Sector Confidence", *South China Morning Post*, 6 August 1999.
37. David Brunnstrom, "No Denial From Top Hanoi Advisor on Bugging Report", Reuters, 21 April 2001.
38. "Vietnam Defense Chiefs Seen as Paying Price for Party Supremo", AFP, 25 March 2001.
39. This was originally outlined in Politburo Resolution 13 of 1988.
40. *Nhan Dan*, 29 July 1994. "Interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Le Mai", *Vietnam Economic Times* (June 1995), pp. 12–13.
41. Nayan Chanda, "Friend or Foe", *FEER*, 22 June 2000, p. 32.
42. Zachary Abuza, "Coping With China" (Ph.D. dissertation, Tufts University, 1998).
43. Abuza, "Debating Globalization", pp. 12–13.
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Reconciling Multiple Economic Multilateralisms: The Case of Singapore

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The Singapore state devotes a high degree of its technocratic resources to economic diplomacy activities on various fronts. As a small, open and globalized city-state economy, Singapore's prosperity is highly dependent upon the continued health and stability of the international economic system. Thus, "systemic security" objectives are afforded notable priority within the framework of Singapore's foreign economic policy (FEP). This article examines how the pursuit of such objectives is revealed through various forms of multilateral economic diplomacy. More specifically, it identifies important conflicts of interest therein, for example, in Singapore's approach to recent developments both in regional economic multilateralism in East Asia and global economic multilateralism. The Singapore state's dealings with the "value-based" issues (such as, labour and environment) embodied in the "new" or "complex" multilateralism also presents a key FEP challenge.

Introduction

Although small in size, the Singapore city-state maintains a high profile foreign economic policy (FEP). This may be generally attributed to its impressive technocratic capabilities as well as the highly internationalized nature of its economy that requires Singapore's FEP protagonists to develop and maintain activist economic diplomacy linkages at various levels of engagement. Given its geoeconomic circumstances and its trading-state credentials, Singapore is very much dependent on the healthy development and maintained stability of the

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international economic system. Particular priority is therefore afforded within its foreign economic policy to upholding different forms of multilateral economic governance designed to foster that development and stability. As will be discussed in more detail, the term "multilateralism" can be applied at both the regional and global levels in reference to geographic scale. Further differentiation also stems from the increasingly contested nature of multilateralism at the meta-level, which relates to questions of how the very essence of multilateral economic governance is transmogrifying in relation to evolving new alignments of power structure and issue-linkage. Consequently, Singapore's highly activist foreign economic policy must contend with multiple forms of multilateralism that are emerging within the international economic system. This is no easy task, as reconciling Singapore's commitment to these different forms involves managing the frictions that often arise between them.

The Evolving Nature of (Economic) Multilateralism

Multilateralism has become an important organizing principle of the contemporary international economic system. Ruggie reminds us that we should not confuse multilateralism with multilateral organizations, as historically, the former has existed in looser institutional arrangements designed to define and stabilize the international property rights of states, as well as manage and foster co-ordinative and collaborative acts between them.[1] Nor should we confuse the meaning of multilateralism with any particular institutional expression of it, be it an international order, regime, or organization. Furthermore, multilateral forms should not be equated with universal geographic scope. In literal terms, "multilateral" means "many-sided", which allows some discretion regarding group number participation in multilateralist arrangements. Thus, we may distinguish between those extant at the regional level and others that aspire to global participation, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). In addition, multilateralism has undergone crucial changes during the post-Cold War period regarding its conceptualization and practical development. On both levels, multilateralism is often evolving within a dialectical tension that derives from contestations over matters of form, balance of participative interests, intended aims, and compatibility with other multilateral arrangements. Indeed, recent developments in the international political economy would suggest that we live in a world of "contesting multilateralisms".

Before returning to this debate, let us explore further the fundamentals of multilateralism itself. For Keohane, multilateralism

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refers to "the practice of co-ordinating national policies in groups of three or more states".[2] Not entirely satisfied with this somewhat "nominal" definition, Ruggie expands this further by providing a more "qualitative" distinction, defining multilateralism as "an institutional form which co-ordinates behaviour among three or more states on the basis of 'generalized' principles of conduct: that is, principles which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions, without regard to the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrence".[3] Two corollaries follow from this definition. First, these "generalized" principles entail an indivisibility among a multilateral collective of actors regarding their range of behaviour. For example, under ideal circumstances, WTO members commonly work to eventually establish global free trade through adherence to the "most favoured nation" (MFN) principle. Secondly, successful developments in multilateralism appear to be founded on the mutual expectations of "diffuse reciprocity", a concept introduced by Keohane that primarily concerns the aggregated benefits expected by members of a multilateral arrangement over time.[4] In contrast, bilateralism is motivated by "specific reciprocity", that is, "the simultaneous balancing of specific *quid pro quos* by each party with every other at all times".[5] Thus, according to Ruggie, multilateralism possesses three main properties: generalized principles of conduct, the common pursuit of an indivisible goal, and diffuse reciprocity.

Naturally, different theories of international relations and international political economy approach multilateralism from different perspectives. As Caporaso notes, neo-realist explanations of how multilateralist arrangements arise amidst an essentially anarchical international system of competing states are based on the self-interested strategic interactions between those states, and have links with rational choice theories on multilateral co-operation.[6] Whereas neo-realism and neo-mercantilism stress the primacy of national interest in the state's policy agenda, neo-liberal institutionalism lays emphasis on maximizing global welfare through the promotion of free trade and international co-operation. Hence, inter-state alliances of a regional or other kind may be expedient in a world of complex interdependence, but not where they threaten the "global" multilateral economic order. The acknowledged fusion here of neo-liberalism and institutionalism stems from a mutual recognition of the role performed by multilateral organizations and regimes in fostering co-operation. Similarly, reflectivists contend that states increasingly share understandings on "the rules of the game, the nature of permissible plays, the linkages between choices and outcomes, the nature of agents involved in the game",[7] thus creating a conducive environment for multilateralism to flourish.

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However, Kahler has observed that "minilateral" great power collaborations often form the inner core of a multilateral institution, and connects with Strange's concept of "structural power" whereby powerful actors in the international system are able to shape the rules and norms that others must comply with.[8] The dominant influence of the "triad" powers — the United States, the European Union (EU), and Japan — within the WTO, and hence the multilateral trading system, is a frequently cited instance of this, which in turn marks a progression from hegemonic to post-hegemonic multilateralism. In other words, the United State's role as the hegemonic underwriter of multilateral economic institutions (MEIs), such as the WTO and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has passed, being replaced by a more polycentric power structure with the rise of the EU and Japan to economic superpower status.[9]

While multilateralism is generally accepted as best able to provide the public goods of both stability and healthy development of the international economic system, the recent course of this development has been increasingly questioned, and this stems partly from associated concerns over the evolutionary path of globalization itself. Such contestation originates from two main sources, and both have notably intensified since the Seattle WTO Ministerial Meeting of December 1999. The first source derives from the increasingly vocal and coalescing group of less developed countries (LDCs) which are frustrated over the advanced industrial economies' (AIE) dominance of the MEIs and their agendas, which they claim continues to marginalize LDC interests and hence achieves little to narrow the persisting and substantive development gap between themselves and the AIEs. The second source relates to the strengthening of the global civil society movement calling for a radical reassessment of MEI agendas and their institutional ethos. Although a fragmentation of interests and objectives are evident within both sources, they are all connected by a shared demand for greater plurality with respect to both actor empowerment and agenda issues within MEI frameworks.

Post-Seattle developments have seen MEIs take certain actions towards facilitating such a broader contesting "actor-based" influence, and various conceptual interpretations of this general trend are offered. For example, O'Brien et al. refer to the enhanced engagement of civil society groups as "complex multilateralism", but observe that this has not yet brought about significant policy innovation nor fundamentally changed the existing world economic order.[10] For Schechter, this trend marks a further shift from "top-down" to "bottom-up multilateralism", whereby the former relates to initiatives undertaken by "conventional international institutions" while the latter concerns the pressures and activities associated with grassroots organizations that collectively

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form the emerging global civil society movement.[11] Closely associated with this is Cox's "new multilateralism" that denotes an attempt to "re-constitute civil societies and political authorities on a global scale, building a system of global governance from the bottom up".[12]

Despite the high media profile given to recent "anti-globalization" protestations at MEI meetings, the effective contesting influence that civil society exerts over MEI governance is currently insignificant. It is, however, most likely that MEIs will increasingly accommodate civil society interests as a consequence of deepening globalization: as economic inter-linkages and interdependence grow within a globalizing world economy so will the domestic economic policy domain become further multilateralized. Many policy areas once deemed inherently "domestic" or "national" in terms of their level of governing competence are being increasingly dragged into the arena of international policy negotiation.[13] This broadening of the multilateral economic agenda concerns both the incorporation of "new" policy issues (for example, labour) and the linkage of these issues to the dominant mainstream (for example, trade, finance, development). In this process, civil society interests will become ever more relevant as they too are gradually integrated into various multilateral economic agendas.

Another area of "contesting multilateralism" concerns the somewhat uneasy relationship between regional-level and global-level multilateralist arrangements within the world economy. The "pessimist" view emphasizes that the proliferation of the former (such as regional trade arrangements) is fundamentally at odds with maintaining the stability of the "global" multilateral economic order. Inherent tensions between the two can arise from various factors. Firstly, pessimists argue that economic regionalism breeds insularity rather than fosters the development of global economic co-operation and community. Secondly, regional "blocism" may eventually lead to the replacement of rule-based multilateral (that is, global) trade relations with interregional power-based relations. Thirdly, free trade agreements and customs unions have trade diversion effects that often outweigh their trade creation effects, thus causing a global welfare loss that could be avoided if the preferential trade concessions involved were converted at a "global" multilateral level.[14]

More specifically, Krishna asserts that the impact of preferential trade arrangements on the incentives for multilateral liberalization is negative.[15] Using an orthodox trade theory model, he argues that the more such arrangements divert trade away from third countries — and subsequently generate rents for the free trade agreement's (FTA) member-state producers — the more these arrangements receive

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political endorsement from these producers. By states later opting for multilateral liberalization, these rents are reduced as third countries are now able to compete on a more level playing field, and hence FTA member-state producers' support for this option is weaker. However, such models are based on the assumption that the producers in question only operate within their home country, and hence with no internationalized interests in either other FTA member countries, or those outside it. Thus, its application to Singapore, whose economy is dominated by foreign transnational corporations (TNCs), is problematic. These TNCs look for market access on a global scale, and consequently advocate trade liberalization through multiple channels and do not show preference for just one particular route.

In contrast to their "pessimist" counterparts, "optimists" highlight the mutually reinforcing nature of regional economic multilateral arrangements (REMAs) and global economic multilateral arrangements (GEMAs). For them, REMAs help condition their participants to the often more rigorous and comprehensive demands of GEMAs. According to this argument, the Association of Southeast Asian Nation's (ASEAN) free trade area project (AFTA) has particularly assisted its less developed members in their compliance with WTO-driven trade multilateralism. Moreover, Lawrence contends that regionalism is not inherently detrimental to global multilateralist pursuits, rather what matters is the nature of the rules that govern both levels of arrangements and the policies that member countries adopt.[16] "Open regionalism" — the founding principle of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum — is a case in point, as APEC seeks to be a regional-level force for global free trade by fostering most-favoured-nation (MFN) trade liberalization among its twenty-one-state membership. In a similar vein, Ethier argues that regional free trade arrangements, such as AFTA and APEC, can spur multilateral trade liberalization by facilitating co-ordination between different groups within the WTO.[17]

Other theoreticians have queried the implications of an arbitrary expansion of FTAs.[18] For example, how might FTAs be a quicker route to achieving global free trade than large-scale multilateral arrangements that have become increasingly cumbersome and complex in nature? This certainly has resonance for the WTO of late, and Singapore's perpetration of bilateral FTAs with other Asia-Pacific trade partners, which will be discussed later. However, while there is some ground for REMA-GEMA compatibility, there is considerably less room for reconciling bilateral FTAs with the principal objectives of WTO multilateralism. Although some have argued that bilateral FTAs may actually be used to compensate losers from multilateral trade liberalization through preferential market access effects and relative adjustments

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in external tariff rates, bilateral FTAs are generally perceived to undermine the cause of multilateral trade liberalization at both regional and global levels.[19]

Foreign Economic Policy and Systemic Security in the Multilateral Context

Small, highly internationalized economies, such as Singapore, have an interest in maintaining the health of multilateral economic orders. As an entrepôt city-state that is extensively connected to regional and global circuits of trade, production, and finance, Singapore's foreign economic policy is very much oriented by its responses to changing systemic variables and developments in the world economy. The attention to "systemic security" in the multilateral context forms part of Singapore's broader pursuit of economic security objectives within its FEP framework.[20] In this framework, economic security may be defined as safeguarding the structural integrity and prosperity-generating capabilities and interests of a politico-economic entity (such as Singapore) in the context of various externalized risks and threats that confront it. Here, "structural integrity" relates to maintaining the internal construction of the economy during its interactions in the global economy, and its ability to meet the basic demands of economic agents located therein. The "prosperity-generating capabilities" aspect broadens the conventional boundaries of the economic security concept beyond its usual attention to minimizing direct and immediate economic vulnerabilities. Safeguarding prosperity-generating capabilities works towards this objective anyway, through reducing the future scope for economic security risks, vulnerabilities, and threats, constituting a sort of "insurance policy" or "preventative medicinal" approach. The particular pursuit of "systemic security" represents one of many economic security "objective" typologies, and specifically concerns *upholding the integrity of the international economic system, entailing co-operative and concessionary acts to support multilateral regimes of systemic governance, facilitate inter-state bargains and maintain overall systemic stability.* For small, highly internationalized economies such as Singapore, the FEP priority afforded to systemic security objectives is usually very high as they have no substantial domestic market to fall back on during times of systemic turbulence.

As previously discussed, there are various levels and forms of economic multilateralism. Moreover, the nature of MEI governance over the international economic system is highly complex, not least because of the growing overlaps, spillovers, and interaction between REMAs and GEMAs. Singapore's balancing of different systemic

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security objectives is further complicated by its highly activist foreign economic policy. Not only do its FEP protagonists afford great priority to supporting the further development of WTO-led multilateralism but they also play a key role in advancing the AFTA; have proved to be catalysers of interregional economic alliances such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM); and have recently sought to secure bilateral FTAs with Asia-Pacific trade partners, partly in response to WTO and APEC faltering on trade liberalization. Furthermore, Singapore's highly state-centric approach to FEP formation faces the challenge of growing civil society contesting for influence within MEIs and the international economic system generally. In sum, reconciling multiple multilateralisms has become of vital importance to Singapore's foreign economic policy, and this centres on balancing various systemic security objectives, some of which appear to contradict others.

Singapore and Global Economic Multilateralism

Supporting the growth and stability of global-level frameworks of multilateral economic governance is the primary systemic security objective of Singapore's foreign economic policy. Its FEP protagonists view the WTO, IMF, and other global MEIs as the overarching "guardian" institutions of the international economic order, sustaining the healthy biosphere in which Singapore's highly internationalized economy can develop and prosper. As its Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) website proclaims: "Singapore places the highest priority in the multilateral trading system which is embodied in the World Trade Organisation. The WTO is the primary forum driving global trade liberalization... Singapore has a strong interest in ensuring that global trade is based on a strong rule-based multilateral trading system."[21]

In symbolic acknowledgement of Singapore's fervent advocacy of global free trade, the city-state was conferred the honour of hosting the WTO's inaugural Ministerial Meeting in December 1996. The Singapore Government continues to ardently support the WTO's trade liberalization agenda on all fronts. By 2001, it had concluded negotiations with forty other WTO members on the Information Technology (IT) Agreement in which tariffs on IT products were to be eliminated. Singapore also signed up for similar "minilateral" WTO accords on telecommunications, financial services, and e-commerce, and has been a vocal campaigner of the WTO's New "Millennium" Round of global trade talks. The aborted launch of the Round at the Seattle Ministerial Meeting, and its continued stalling into 2001, caused much consternation among Singapore's leaders. In response, the

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government took every opportunity through various channels of economic diplomacy to promote the Round's earliest possible launch. When this came at the November 2001 WTO Ministerial Meeting at Doha, it was heralded by the Singapore Government as a great triumph.[22]

Singapore also affords a similar level of deference to the IMF in matters of global finance. During the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, it was notably reluctant, in comparison with its fellow ASEAN member states, to criticize the IMF's crisis-management approach towards the region. While this may be partly attributable to Singapore's relatively unscathed passage through the crisis, it owed more to the faith the city-state's leadership wished to demonstrate in the IMF's multilateral competence. During the latter months of 1997, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong paid multiple visits to Indonesian President Soeharto in Jakarta in failed attempts to persuade him to more resolutely co-operate with the IMF. At about the same time, Singapore also expressed notable scepticism about Japan's proposal to create an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) in response to the crisis outbreak, mainly because this posed a potential threat to the IMF's multilateral competence and integrity, and hence possibly undermine confidence in the global financial order.[23]

While Singapore's primary support conferred to GEMAs is compliant with the neo-liberal institutional worldview, elements of neo-realism are too evident in the cognitive-ideological dimension of its FEP. These derive from an entrenched "survival ideology" that has long oriented Singapore's foreign policy *per se*. Accompanying this is a heightened sense of national security consciousness cultivated by the state, and accordingly an overt strategic approach to both foreign and economic policy-making. As Singapore's Finance Minister, Richard Hu, articulated in his 1997 budget statement: "we have no choice but to be open and to compete in the world market to survive and prosper. We can grow faster by taking advantage of global markets and advanced technology... Adapting nimbly to changes in the environment and staying relevant to global demand remains fundamental to Singapore's survival."[24] Thus, while Singapore's FEP protagonists publicly state the prime importance they attach to upholding the global multilateral trade and finance orders — and the WTO's and IMF's respective multilateral responsibilities for governing them — they are simultaneously working feverishly at bilateral, regional, and interregional levels of economic diplomacy to advance Singapore's strategic economic interests. In addition, and as previously noted, the Singapore state must also address the changing nature of multilateral economic agendas that are beginning to reflect stronger civil societal interests. The extent to which

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these endeavours are compatible with Singapore's global systemic security interests is discussed below.

Singapore and Regional Economic Multilateralism

Singapore's activist regional economic diplomacy stems from its extensive integration into East Asia's deepening regional economic system. The city-state's trade, finance, and investment interests are very much dependent on the prospering development of that system, and from this derives the systemic security objectives that largely orientate this diplomacy. Singapore's FEP protagonists are well aware that regional and global economic developments are entwined in an interlocking relationship. As a regional hub economy that serves global circuits of capital, trade, and finance, the global dimension of the regional is particularly well understood in Singapore, and this commands a key aspect of the government's "regionalization strategy" that was launched in the 1990s.

In commenting upon the general nature of East Asian regional multilateralism, Harris notes three key defining characteristics. First, its manifestations in the region are intended to support rather than substitute global multilateralism. Secondly, much emphasis is placed on semi-official or "track-two" activities, in contrast to other regions, which reflects the preferred informal, gradual, and consensual approach to fostering regionalism in East Asia. The third characteristic concerns the "inclusive" nature of East Asian multilateralism, which itself has close links to the aforementioned "open regionalism" principle and the invitation extended to extra-regional powers (such as the United States and the EU) to participate in regional multilateral fora.[25] In indirect reference to Singapore, Harris also remarks that, "regional multilateralism has helped smaller countries to balance, with norms and peer pressure, the regional dominance of Indonesia and Japan, to integrate China into the region and to limit U.S. unilateralism".[26]

Singapore very much promotes the "open regionalism" ideal as it commits REMAs to demonstrate their global multilateral utility, as perhaps best exemplified by the official intended purpose of APEC. Like most other APEC members, Singapore bought into the organization's "concerted unilateral liberalization" (CUL) framework idea in which each member agrees to implement individual action plans to conduct MFN-based trade liberalization, and hence benefiting from the subsequent diffused reciprocity gains. However, crisis-related tensions arising within the APEC forum in the late 1990s led to a breakdown in the trade liberalization consensus, and a shift to direct

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reciprocal negotiations — and hence specific reciprocity — in the Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalisation (EVSL) scheme.[27] The EVSL was initially proposed by the United States and strongly supported by Singapore, and was designed to push along trade liberalization on a sectoral basis after disappointing results with the CUL's voluntary unilateralism. Moreover, after these direct reciprocal negotiations themselves broke down, APEC was compelled to refer EVSL-related disputes to the WTO. On the one hand, this showed APEC's deference to the WTO's own multilateral competence but, on the other, it marked a broader shift from diffused to specific reciprocity regarding trade liberalization within the Asia-Pacific, this being reinforced by the proliferation of bilateral FTAs within APEC's membership from 1999 onwards.

Singapore has been among the most active perpetrators of the Asia-Pacific bilateral FTA (APBFTA) trend. By March 2002, it had signed free trade agreements with New Zealand and Japan, undertaken formalized negotiations for similar agreements with the United States, Australia, Mexico, Canada, and the European Free Trade Area group, as well as initiated a joint feasibility study with Chile. In legitimizing this policy, an MTI official commented in an interview that this was a "messy but practical" approach to maintaining the momentum of Asia-Pacific trade liberalization, yet it was also "a means to fortify Singapore's bilateral links with strategic foreign partners".[28] While Singapore's virtually zero-level tariffs and small size imply that trade diversion effects of its bilateral FTAs will be negligible, some fellow ASEAN member states, particularly Malaysia, have expressed notable disquiet over its potentially adverse effect on the integrity of AFTA. In February 2001, Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad articulated specific concern about the trade deflection problem of semi-finished products from bilateral FTA partners entering Singapore, then being fully completed in the city-state, and thereafter securing "back door", zero-tariff entry into the wider AFTA market.[29] His Trade Minister, Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, further stated that Malaysia would oppose any moves by Singapore to advocate the extension of AFTA to Australia and New Zealand, through a trilateral FTA arrangement with Singapore or otherwise[30]. In reply, Singapore's MTI stated that its local content laws did not permit such trade deflection to occur, implying that Singapore-made exports were sufficiently locally sourced to legitimately qualify for access to the AFTA market.[31] Moreover, Goh Chok Tong later argued that Singapore's BFTA strategy ensured that key partners outside Southeast Asia remained engaged in ASEAN.[32] However, Malaysia is more concerned with the geostrategic rather than technical implications of Singapore's bilateral FTA strategy for ASEAN, and

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further argued in July 2001 that ASEAN member states should seek regional group approval before embarking on bilateral trade pact deals.[33]

Notwithstanding the expansion of Singapore's commercial interests well beyond the sub-regional locale of Southeast Asia, it has much to gain from the AFTA project. The ASEAN group accounts for around a quarter of Singapore's trade, and other member states are obliged to eliminate far more stringent trade barriers in comparison with the city-state. The AFTA project itself is one of many regional trade arrangements to have emerged within the world economy, and its consistency with WTO rules on such arrangements (as embodied in Article XXIV) has not been seriously questioned. Yet Singapore and other ASEAN states have not only had to justify AFTA's compatibility with global trade multilateralism but also address its "concentric circle" relationship with APEC's own regional economic multilateralism.[34] AFTA is scheduled to establish tariff-free trade between ASEAN's core members (Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand) by 2002, and between all its ten member states by 2010.[35] However, if APEC succeeds in its objective of creating a "free trade and investment zone" across the Asia-Pacific by the set 2010 and 2020 deadlines then it will quickly negate AFTA's prime significance by absorbing it into a wider regional trade arrangement. Generally speaking, however, Singapore's FEP protagonists look upon AFTA's and APEC's respective trade liberalization projects as mutually reinforcing. In reiterating an earlier point, APEC's developed economy members see AFTA as helping many of the region's developing countries to become more conditioned to multilateral trade liberalization and negotiation *per se*. Meanwhile, the CUL and EVSL programmes no doubt assisted ASEAN members of APEC to move closer towards their AFTA objectives, albeit not that significantly.[36] Singapore's active involvement in these twin processes thus comply with systemic security objectives that relate to building up international frameworks, which cultivate freer trade within both the regional and global economic system.

Post-crisis developments in the Asia-Pacific international political economy, however, have brought significant changes to the regional multilateral calculus. In addition to the APBFTA trend, a coalescing East Asian grouping has emerged in the form of the "ASEAN Plus 3" framework. This comprises the ten ASEAN states plus Japan, China, and South Korea, which since late 1997 have initiated an annualized summit process and parallel ministerial-level meetings that primarily focus on ways to improve regional economic governance in East Asia. Much of the framework's substantive work concerns finance, especially with regard to creating co-operative mechanisms intended to avert the

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recurrence of regional financial crisis. Japan has taken a particular lead here, providing the main financial resources behind the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI) that significantly extends and fortifies ASEAN's pre-existing currency swap arrangement across the ASEAN Plus 3 group. There has been some debate among the group's members whether the CMI scheme, introduced in October 2000, should seek IMF endorsement before any future deployment. True to their respective forms, Singapore advocated this link while Malaysia did not. As it transpired, it was agreed that the CMI's currency swap deals would only be activated in tandem with IMF-supervised reforms, although this would be reviewed in 2004.

Singapore's robust financial position negated the need to enter into a CMI agreement with Japan. More generally, Japan's post-crisis hegemonic foray into the sphere of regional financial governance is a cause of some disquiet among Singapore's FEP protagonists insofar as it could disrupt the equilibrium of interests between the Asia-Pacific's great powers — an equilibrium that is perceived to best serve the city-state's systemic security interests. Singapore's scepticism over Japan's precursorial and ill-fated AMF proposal owing to the potential threat this posed to the IMF was earlier noted. Singapore's circumspection also extends to other ideas arising within ASEAN Plus 3, on enhancing regional integration. Although at the November 2000 ASEAN Plus 3 summit, Goh Chok Tong commented that working towards the creation of an East Asian Free Trade Area (EAFTA) over the longer term would prove a valuable exercise in fostering regional cohesion between Southeast and Northeast Asia,[37] Singapore's leadership is unlikely to advocate EAFTA's development against vocal opposition from the United States. On the one hand, Singapore has publicly welcomed ASEAN Plus 3 developments in regional economic diplomacy, yet there remains considerable concern over its impact on APEC regional multilateralism, as well as the signal that a more exclusive East Asian economic regionalism sends to Washington.[38] These are both connected, as APEC is perceived by Singapore's leadership as a crucial device of economic diplomacy to strategically engage the United States in the region. A forthcoming Singapore–U.S. bilateral FTA — that will be the first the United States will have established with any Asian state — is similarly motivated. As discussed earlier, APEC is also seen by Singapore to have significant multilateral utility in that it aims to promote global free trade and thus underpin the WTO regime. Nevertheless, the strategic compulsions of Singapore's FEP protagonists has meant that some active involvement in the ASEAN Plus 3 framework is necessary, if only to remind its fellow participating states of their other multilateral economic responsibilities and obligations.

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A further relevant aspect of Singapore's economic diplomacy concerns its role as a catalytic instigator of interregional alliances. The Asia–Europe Meeting (ASEM), East Asia–Latin America Forum (EALAF), and ASEAN–Mercosur Agreement all originated from Singaporean diplomatic proposals. Although the current main purpose of these interregional frameworks is to enhance the mutual socialization process, with no real substantive projects such as trade agreements having been initiated, they do add a further layer of complexity to the system of international economic relations. Interregional multilateralism is furthermore an emerging global trend, and Singapore's contribution to it is seen by its leadership as part of reconciling regional and global economic orders. Moreover, just as with APEC, Singapore will continue to support the development of ASEM and EALAF so long as they demonstrate some form of global multilateral utility: for instance, where they improve co-operation and understanding between different regional membership subsets at WTO and IMF level discussions. However, with this new complexity comes the risk of potential instability by adding another alternative and potentially competing channel to global economic multilateralism. Again, we can expect Singapore to act as a guardian of the latter cause in its involvement with interregional diplomacy frameworks.

Singapore and the New, Complex Multilateralism

From an entirely different perspective, Singapore's FEP protagonists have had to address another level of complexity emerging within the global political economy — that being the aforementioned "new" or "complex" multilateralism. The Singapore Government undoubtedly welcomes the more effective engagement of less developed countries (LDCs) at the WTO and IMF. It also certainly advocates the expansion of multilateral negotiations for reducing newly identified areas of non-tariff barriers that are being increasingly exposed by globalizing processes. Yet Singapore remains extremely wary of civil societal pressures upon MEIs to accommodate both greater NGO (non-governmental organization) participation in the negotiating process and the interest issues (such as labour, environment, human rights) they champion. Moreover, the polemics surrounding how civil society interests are to be best represented in various multilateral economic agendas are perceived in Singapore as potentially disruptive to the overall stability and progressive development of global MEIs, as well as the international economic system generally. There are two main interrelated challenges facing Singapore's FEP protagonists here. First, how Singapore's overtly state-centric approach to FEP formation can come to

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terms with society-centric developments, both domestically and internationally. Secondly, how will Singapore's FEP protagonists address "new" trade policy issues with regard to the pursuit of systemic security objectives. As discussed below, how the Singapore Government copes with the first challenge will affect its dealings with the second.

At the core of the Singapore polity is a centralized state power-base that presides over a comparatively closed and élitist policy-making structure. Moreover, as Chong comments: "Singapore's original success has been built upon the austerity and discipline of a political economy of authoritarian corporatism, enabling a unified voice in foreign policy presentation."[39] Despite this strong state-centricity in Singapore's FEP formation, the government's own propagated concept of "Singapore Inc." suggests that an inclusive, team-working approach prevails within the domestic political economy. In this context, the state identifies "political leaders and government, institutions and academia, chambers of commerce and trade associations, industrialists and labour, foreign investors and local companies, [and] the people" as the nation's stakeholders, and that: "Together, these stakeholders form Singapore Inc., working together like entities in a large corporation. Each responsible for a specific aspect of Singapore's value chain. Each working as a team to support and add value to our business partners."[40] Thus, while policy-making processes in Singapore are very much controlled at the state's centre, it also outreaches to various stakeholding constituencies for their views and opinions. Nevertheless, organized civil society in Singapore is not really that independent from the government, has very limited contesting influence in general, and is essentially subservient to the developmental mindset of the state. In sum, Singapore's "people sector" comprises spontaneous civil society and state-initiated voluntary organizations. The somewhat oxymoronically termed "state-related NGOs" fall into this latter category, for example, the Singapore Environment Council (SEC), and National Trade Union Congress (NTUC), whilst the former remain far more marginalized within the Singapore polity. An important corollary of this is that the primary role of domestic societal stakeholders in FEP formation is significantly state-mediated, and is more affirmative rather than influential in nature.

The Singapore Government's relations with domestic civil society regarding "new" trade policy issues provide a good illustration of the above. Both the NTUC and the SEC are essentially state constructs, formed as the main official representative organizations in their respective fields of labour and environment. The NTUC is managed by state-linked officials and, furthermore, does not have to formally lobby the government as such because its Secretary General is a Minister

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without Portfolio.[41] In interviews with both NTUC and Ministry of Manpower (MOM) officials, both sides commented that although there has not been much direct dialogue between the two organizations on trade–labour issues, their views are essentially the same, this being the promotion of open trade and investment owing to the positive employment effects and social progress this is deemed to generate. A similar relationship exists between the SEC and the Ministry of Environment (MOE). Indeed, the SEC was initially part of the MOE but became organizationally independent in 1995, although the MOE has representation on its Board of Directors.

Like the government, the NTUC is a free trade advocate and, in principle, against trade-labour clauses. At the 1999 WTO Seattle Ministerial, the NTUC delegation did not participate in the civil society demonstrations, and issued a public statement expressing their disappointment over the aborted launch of the New "Millennium" Round. In the meantime, both the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) took another NTUC delegation to task over its lack of support for labour standards in the trade arena.[42] While the NTUC's official line is that trade should not be held hostage to the labour standards issue, it does support ratification of highly prescribed ILO conventions, for example, on forced labour. The SEC, meanwhile, sent a delegation to the 1996 WTO Singapore Ministerial, and to the WTO's 1998 Geneva Ministerial, but did not attend the 1999 Seattle Ministerial. It is not engaged in the trade–environment standards debate owing to its own self-confessed lack of cognizance and technical expertise on the issue. Even if the SEC viewed the trade–environment linkage positively, the extent of its advocacy is ultimately constrained by the MOE.

Both the Singapore Government and its associated civil society groups' sceptical views on the "complex multilateralism" may be further explained by its semi-peripheral position within the world economic structure. Naturally, both a government's position and that of civil society on "new" trade policy issues depend very much on which part of the world they come from. For example, trade unions from advanced developed countries stand to benefit directly from trade–labour clauses that impose proportionately higher compliant costs upon less developed countries, as this will help protect the former members' jobs. As one would expect, trade union movements in the developing world take a different view on this particular issue. Given that Singapore has more in common with the AIE "core" powers, whose governments also generally agree to at least advance discussions on "new" trade policy issues, it may appear somewhat surprising to some that the city-state is not similarly advocating a more sophisticated

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multilateral trade agenda. While it empathizes with this general position of the AIE "core", Singapore also shares the concerns of the LDC "periphery" that the incorporation of both labour and environment clause-linkage into the WTO agenda is inherently problematic. This particularly relates to how such polemical "value-based" issues could potentially drive a wedge between sections of the WTO membership, as well as acting as both a drag on, and distraction to advancing trade liberalization itself. As an interviewed MOM official indicatively commented, "together with other ASEAN members, we have argued strongly against any trade–labour linkage as we are concerned that such linkage is likely to be used for protectionist purposes detrimental to, the causes of both trade liberalization and global economic growth".[43] At the same time, the pragmatic Singapore Government has used its semi-periphery intermediating position to propose ways forward between the "core" and "periphery" countries on these contentious multilateral issues. For example, on the trade–labour controversy it has lent its support to a minilateral route to linkage, proposing a voluntary compliance to higher standards by countries willing to undertake it rather than a strict regulationist application of trade–labour rules. Such efforts are also consistent with the systemic security objectives of Singapore's FEP, in that, rather than totally disengage from "complex multilateralism", it is seeking ways ahead to maintain stability during a transitionary phase in the WTO's governance over the multilateral trade order.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis examined how Singapore's foreign economic policy has reacted to various changes occurring within the multilateral economic order in accordance with "systemic security" objectives. The fast evolving nature of economic multilateralism itself was examined in relation to new conceptual and practical developments, as well as how these related to each other. Singapore's highly activist foreign economic policy, which seeks to advance various strategic interests through multiple channels of economic diplomacy, adds further complications to reconciling its different systemic security objectives. Furthermore, this coincides with a time at the millennial cusp when the foundations of the multilateral economic order have been significantly shaken.

Singapore's FEP protagonists continue to accord the greatest priority to upholding global-level multilateral economic institutions, such as the WTO and IMF. They are, however, simultaneously and actively engaged in promoting the development of regional-level multilateral economic arrangements, such as AFTA and APEC. Here, they strongly

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advocate the cultivation of these arrangements' global multilateral utility, in keeping with the "open regionalism" principle. They have also been circumspect on regional integration initiatives that may deepen regional bloc divisions within the international economic system. This helps to explain Singapore's relatively cool response to the newly emergent ASEAN Plus 3 framework, which constitutes the first coalescing of an exclusive East Asian economic group.

Notwithstanding this overarching systemic security objective of supporting the mutual stability and healthy development of regional and global-level forms of multilateral economic governance, the strategic impulses of Singapore's FEP protagonists have drawn the city-state down paths of economic diplomacy that put the above at some risk. Singapore's fervent involvement in the APBFTA trend is helping to create a "lattice regionalism" of bilateral trade arrangements across the Asia-Pacific that marks a further shift to specific reciprocity in trade negotiations, and hence away from the original diffuse reciprocity principles on which the WTO and APEC's multilateral trade liberalization is based. Singapore's trade diplomats would argue that the two trends can not only co-exist but mutually reinforce the other as both work towards the same goal of conditioning Asia-Pacific states to further liberalize their trade policies. Yet, it appears that the APBFTA trend has stolen the momentum of at least APEC-driven trade liberalization, and may also have distracted some states from the WTO multilateral process. Furthermore, Singapore retains a deep economic dependence upon the prospering development of the East Asian region, and hence may out of geoeconomic necessity adopt a more positive attitude towards the ASEAN Plus 3 framework in the years ahead.

Regarding meta-level changes to the multilateral economic order, Singapore's state-centric approach to FEP formation has had to come to terms with civil societal-centric interests as embodied in the "new", or "complex" multilateralism. The Singapore state is wary of any incorporation of "value-based" issues (such as labour, and environment) into multilateral economic agendas. The position of the Singapore Government and domestic civil society movements on this matter owes much to the economy's own commercial and geoeconomic situational imperatives. As was discussed, Singapore's FEP protagonists are reluctant to support the accommodation of polemical "new" trade policy issues that even carry a minimal risk of destabilizing the WTO multilateral trade regime. Yet, as was also noted, the globalization-inducing multilateralization of the domestic economic policy realm may eventually compel Singapore to adopt a more positive attitude here. This will gradually develop an additional level of complexity to the city-state's multilateral economic diplomacy.

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Book Reviews

***Indonesia's Transformation and the Stability of Southeast Asia.* By Angel Rabasa and Peter Chalk.** Santa Monica, California, USA: Rand, 2001. 115pp.

This little book, just over a hundred pages, published earlier in 2001 before the events of 11 September, seeks to draw the attention of American policy-makers to the importance of Indonesia, and Southeast Asia, to American interests. It is also an excellent introduction, especially for the non-specialist reader, to recent developments in Indonesia.

In the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War, Indonesia and Southeast Asia were relegated to relatively minor importance in the American scheme of things. For instance, during the 1998-99 economic and political meltdown of Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country and the key player in ASEAN, official Washington seemed interested only in the democratization of the country and the observance of human rights. It is not that these were not important. They were and still are, but it was almost a unidimensional perspective, so much so that one got the impression that the Clinton Administration would not consider vital U.S. interests threatened if Indonesia disintegrated or descended into chaos. In this context, *Indonesia's Transformation and the Stability of Southeast Asia* is most welcome in that it looks at the importance of Indonesia — and Southeast Asia — in geopolitical terms. Events since 11 September 2001 only reinforce this importance, given the enhanced need to move military forces between the Indian and Pacific Oceans through the sea-lanes of Southeast Asia in support of operations in Central and South Asia. At a time when China looms large in the geoeconomics and geopolitics of the region, it is good to be reminded

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that Southeast Asia has a population of over 500 million, almost half that of China.

The book explains the weakening of ASEAN's ability, from the second half of the 1990s, to manage and counter security threats in Southeast Asia even as threats such as political instability, ethnic and religious conflict, separatist movements, illegal migration, narcotics, and environmental degradation have grown. The key role of Indonesia in ASEAN is appropriately highlighted. However, there may be oversimplification in the claim that, "Over the last three decades, Southeast Asia evolved as a loose security community under Indonesian leadership" (p. 3). ASEAN was a loose security community consisting of most, but not all, of Southeast Asia — Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, comprising over 120 million people, were not part of ASEAN until the latter half of the nineties. Furthermore, Indonesian "leadership" was more implicit than explicit — it being regarded more as the first among equals. Indeed, several important ideas and initiatives in ASEAN in the 1980s and 1990s originated with other members, especially Thailand and Singapore, though it would be true that none of them would probably have gone through without Indonesia's prior assent.

The book argues that a weak, unstable Indonesia unable to deal with its multifaceted problems could slide into one of a number of downside scenarios which will be against U.S. interests, including disintegration or the emergence of a regime with radical Islamic and anti-Western orientation. However, it may be worth noting here that at present Islam in Indonesia is still mostly moderate, as exemplified by the Nahdatul Ulama and the Muhammadiyah, the two largest Muslim organizations in the country. Democratization and economic-cum-social distress may offer opportunities for the more radical groups to advance their cause. Still, the coming into power of a more Islam-oriented government will not necessarily be the beginning of a slide towards a radical anti-Western government. The United States and Southeast Asia will have to learn to live with the former possibility as one outcome of democratization.

The authors also argue that an unstable Indonesia and Southeast Asia would provide opportunities for the rising power in Asia, China, to expand its influence into the region and upset the regional status quo, making it more difficult for the United States to maintain a security balance in the region. Taking a long-term view, beyond this decade, this proposition is probably valid. However, for the short and medium terms, a qualification may be in order. During the first decade of this century, China is likely to be so preoccupied with domestic developments and modernization, that it may well prefer the maintenance of

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the status quo in Southeast Asia. It would probably want to avoid new tensions with the United States, not to mention, from Beijing's perspective, that instability in the region may provide the United States with fresh opportunities to strengthen its own position, including possible acquisition of new military base facilities.

On the other hand, according to the authors, a strong, stable and democratic Indonesia could "resume its leadership role in ASEAN, further regional integration on democratic principles, contribute to maintaining stability in Southeast Asia and deter potential Chinese adventurism"(p. 99). Such an Indonesia would also make it easier for Washington, in the context of domestic U.S. politics, to provide Jakarta with substantial economic, political, and military support. However, the authors assess that, despite some hopeful signs, the prospects of democratic consolidation being achieved under Abdurrahman Wahid, or under a Megawati government, are not bright: "Indonesia's prospects for the short to medium term (one to three years) are for a continuation of weak governments and worsening of security conditions in provinces experiencing separatist or communal violence. Over the longer term, barring a lasting upturn in the economy or a workable agreement with disaffected provinces, the odds may be better than even for one or more of the downside scenarios ... to come to pass"(pp. 75–76).

These downside scenarios include variants of military rule; return to authoritarian civilian rule (not likely to be stable in the post-Soeharto environment); a regime with a greater Islamic orientation; and disintegration. It is a dismal menu for the authors, except for one of the three variants of military rule, namely the so-called Turkish model of military rule of limited duration and goals, presumably to restore some stability and economic growth, with eventual return to civilian government. The other two variants would be the Pakistani model (that is, before President Pervez Musharraf changed it into something more akin to the Turkish model) where the military formed an alliance with radical Muslim forces, and the Myanmar model of repressive open-ended military rule — both of which would be unsustainable, leading to Islamism or disintegration scenarios.

The Turkish model is described as a "military-technocratic government that preserves the balance between the secular and the Islamic factions in the TNI" (p. 72), with economic policy-making in the hands of non-political technocrats. This type of government could become more attractive to Indonesians if the present democratic order does not succeed in improving stability or reviving the economy, though, to the authors of this book, it would be the second best alternative to democratic consolidation. They are concerned that likely adverse U.S. and Western reactions to such a development, including

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pressures on Indonesia to return to democracy, could produce a backlash against the United States not only in Indonesia but also in other states of Southeast Asia for whom the restoration of stability and the revival of the economy in Indonesia are clearly the foremost priorities. While this might have been a worry in 2000 and early 2001, one wonders how serious a concern it would be today in view of the changed mood in the U.S. political establishment after 11 September 2001. Support, or lack of it, for the U.S.-led anti-terrorist campaign has now become the most important factor in gauging U.S. relations with other countries. The point is well illustrated by the contrast between Washington's current impatience with Indonesia's lack of action against Indonesian extremists linked to international terrorism and its satisfaction with the actions of Malaysia and Singapore, which used the Internal Security Act to detain without trial their own extremists linked to the al-Qaeda network.

Having argued the case for Indonesia's importance to U.S interests in Asia, the authors advance suggestions for American policy-makers in the last chapter. These include working with Japan, regional allies, and international financial institutions to provide Indonesia with the resources needed to help overcome its many crises; engaging the Indonesian military and building up Indonesia's defence capabilities, especially in the field of air transport; building a constructive Indonesian role in regional security and establishing a closer U.S.-Indonesia defence relationship including eventual access and basing arrangements for U.S. military forces.

Arguably, all the above measures would be in the interest of the region in so far as they help stabilize Indonesia and Southeast Asia, consolidate a U.S. presence in the region and enhance regional security co-operation without alienating or isolating China with whom Southeast Asia seeks co-operative engagement within the framework of a balance of power underpinned by the American presence. The problem will be to make it work, given the unhealthy mixture in Indonesia of effete institutions, poor governance, strong nationalism, the proclivity of its armed forces to human rights violations, and a persistent sense of a proprietary role in Southeast Asia.

Where does one even begin? Perhaps the first priority should be to help the Indonesians put their own house in order by not only reviving the economy but also improving national institutions and governance, including the conduct of the armed forces.

Indonesia's Transformation and the Stability of Southeast Asia also provides a balanced, well-researched and succinct analysis of political developments from the fall of Soeharto to the later part of the Wahid government; events leading to the East Timor crisis and its

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consequences; the separatist challenges in Aceh and Irian Jaya; and ethnic and religious violence in Eastern and Central Indonesia and in Kalimantan; the changes within the Indonesian military since the fall of Soeharto; and the challenges of decentralization. There is also a useful chapter on the Muslim separatist movements in the Philippines and Thailand. The value of much of this writing is unaffected by the events since 11 September 2001. The authors must be commended for putting so much useful information and analysis into so few pages.

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***Malaysia: Mahathirism, Hegemony and the New Opposition*. By John Hilley**. London & New York: Zed Books, 2001. 305pp.

John Hilley's book on Mahathir and the Malaysian leader's construction of a number of hegemonic identities in the course of his leadership of the country and the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) is a theoretically sophisticated and articulate rendition of Malaysian politics in the last two decades from a Gramscian perspective. The book is thoughtful, meticulously researched, and coherently delivered.

Divided into nine chapters and an appendix that clarifies the Gramscian terms used, the book takes the reader through the various forces that shaped Mahathir's early thinking on Malay motivations and inadequacies, including the early challenges that he had posed to Tunku Abdul Rahman (Malaysia's first prime minister) and UMNO. It then traces how Mahathir assumed political power in 1981 and set about the task of fashioning an all-inclusive Gramscian-styled hegemony that covered the political, ideological, and economic spheres. There is also a sophisticated treatment of what social forces and agencies were utilized to shape this hegemonic discourse and the challenges that the hegemony faced.

Mahathir's early motivations and vision are described as a "... reformist, growth-driven agenda conducive to modern Islamic thinking; one that would give impetus to bumiputera competitiveness and lift Malays out of their 'dependent' socio-economic condition" (p.50). The very early engines of *bumiputera* economic upliftment that had obtained from the New Economic Policy (NEP) "... was now being constrained by the reluctance of Malays and Malay capital to compete in a more open-market environment" (p.50). In response to this ethnic

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malaise, Mahathir utilized state capital and appropriated non-Malay capital as well to fashion a policy of rapid state-led growth (p. 51).

The new strategy of state-led growth, however, led to a number of contradictions. The first contradiction was to decouple Malay vested interests and the subsidy mentality from modernity and industrialization. This process involved a denial of all Malay economic advances that had been achieved till then. Additionally, this decoupling had to accommodate the significant Malay rural voters who depended on the NEP infrastructure (p. 58). Accordingly, beginning from 1990, when the National Development Policy (NDP) was implemented, "... a more assertive language was emerging, giving cautionary notice of a scaled-down system of Malay privileges" (p. 58). The new language and mission also allowed Mahathir to appropriate control and disbursement of resources away from the NEP architecture to the corporate sector and state agencies. As a result, UMNO became more directly involved in entrepreneurial activities and acquired greater access to resources and their distribution. This new configuration wedded the Malay political élite to the state purse.

The Asian financial crisis of 1997 threatened Mahathir's hegemony in its entirety. Challenges appeared at the ideological level both at home and abroad. International institutionalist prescriptions of the sort administered by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank would have challenged Mahathir's model of involving politics with economics and using precious state resources to bail out ailing and debt-ridden firms, directly dismantling the hegemony that had been painstakingly engineered. Hence, the Indonesian and Thai decisions were clearly untenable in the Malaysian case. Additionally, the international financial community appeared to have a staunch local supporter who was part of the Mahathir power élite: Anwar Ibrahim. Hence, Hilley concludes that Mahathir made the bold decision to uphold his domestic political hegemony by imposing capital controls, detaining Anwar on a variety of charges, and pruning the mass media that appeared to be in support of Anwar. The hegemony that had been carefully constructed by neutralizing alternative centres of power in the judiciary and the Conference of Rulers, which had earlier been taken to task, was simply too valuable to surrender. The strategy of destroying the new challenge was, however, not without its own contradictions. While lamblasting Western financial institutions and George Soros, Mahathir conveniently ignored Bank Negara's role in widespread currency speculation (p. 68). Similarly, in moving against Anwar, Mahathir invoked the analogy of the revolution devouring its own children, an act that would in turn weaken the hegemonic construct by alienating loyal supporters and making important domestic institutions

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like the judiciary and the police force lose considerable respect and legitimacy. This loss of credibility was most aptly illustrated when the state had to re-enact the arms heist of the Al Ma'unah Islamic deviationist group in 2001 to lay to rest widespread rumours that the entire episode had been engineered by the state to stage a crisis.

Hilley also carefully reconstructs how the Anwar affair changed the political landscape in Malaysia and allowed Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) and the Democratic Action Party (DAP) to capitalize on a unique window of opportunity to unseat UMNO and the Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition government. However, it would appear that the philosophical motivations of both parties are sufficiently divergent for the opportunity to be squandered. Mahathir's ability to locate the new hegemonic discourse within an admixture of developmentalism, consumerism, and a more inclusive national culture in the NDP also proved useful in deflecting challenges to the hegemony in the 1990s. Although Hilley acknowledges that broad-based populist agendas that have the potential to dismantle Mahathir's hegemony are difficult to construct, given local idiosyncratic conditions, he correctly notes that the Anwar affair has indeed challenged Mahathir's hegemony and led to higher levels of political and social consciousness.

The last chapter identifies a number of stages that Mahathir's constructed hegemony has undergone. These include an "Early Mahathirism" from 1981 to 1985, described as a "project striving to negotiate the tensions between Malay nationalism and economic developmentalism" (p. 254). "Mid-Mahathirism", spanning the period from 1985 to 1990, is described as the building of a neo-liberal corporate consensus through deregulation and privatization (p. 255). "Late Mahathirism" from 1991 to 1996 is identified as the construction of a more inclusive concept of nationalism. And finally, "Crisis Mahathirism" is identified as the period from 1997 to 2000 and said to involve recourse to emergency economic measures and the utilization of coercive instruments to contain the "organic crisis of hegemony" (p. 256).

From 2000, a period that Hilley describes as the "New Political Landscape", the state can be expected to employ more coercive strategies to retain hegemony. The recent ban on *ceramah* (rallies) held by PAS, and the ensuing confrontations between the police and PAS in Kedah, are presumably indicative of this approach. Hence, it is arguable that Hilley's construct provides a useful landscape to understand recent developments in Malaysian domestic politics. Nonetheless, it is conceivable that the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the ensuing multilateral crackdown on radical Islam, the discovery of terrorist cells in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, and the

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detention of Nik Adli (the son of Kelantan Chief Minister Nik Aziz) for having trained in Afghanistan and subscribing to militant Islam could well weaken the counter-hegemonic discourse of PAS. In this regard, UMNO can be expected to capitalize on recent developments and project itself as the vanguard of a liberal and tolerant variety of Islam that is more suited for practice in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state.

Whereas Hilley's book is a major contribution to the recent scholarship on Malaysia, especially from a left-of-centre perspective, one wonders whether the hegemonic construct that he attributes to Mahathir's conscious construction is entirely a conscious and self-directed effort. Morever, even if it is, whether his successor, if such an individual does indeed exist, will be able to retain and exercise the construct. In other words, is Mahathir's person interactive with the existence of Gramscian-styled hegemony?

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Self-Determination in East Timor: The United Nations, the Ballot, and International Intervention. **By Ian Martin.** London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001. 171pp.

Ian Martin, former Special Representative of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General for the East Timor Popular Consultation and former head of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), is the first UN senior staff member to publish his "account of events and own analysis of them" (p. 13). (Jamsheed Marker, former Personal Representative of the UN Secretary-General for East Timor, will probably be the next.) This book begins with a brief background description of the East Timor question, in particular between Indonesia's regime change in May 1998 and the signing of the 5 May 1999 New York agreements, which set the conditions for the Popular Consultation in East Timor. Martin describes how the dynamics of the negotiations evolved during that period, particularly the 27 January 1999 announcement when Indonesia caught Portugal — and probably everybody else — by surprise, when President Habibie stated that he was prepared to accept the independence of East Timor if the special autonomy proposal was rejected. Martin points out that when the Indonesian Government announced that it was prepared to accept the territory's independence,

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the dynamics of the negotiations changed. Lisbon ceased to be focused on the nature of the autonomy deal — as promoted by Jakarta — and became interested in the method of consultation to be chosen. Martin says that "a UN-administered universal ballot" was "a key objective" to Portugal (p. 28).

Even though this is largely true, it might be slightly misleading. It is now known that Lisbon was not at all confident that this would be possible and was prepared to accept under certain conditions — if necessary and if accepted by the pro-independence leader Xanana Gusmão — either an indirect ballot in which the East Timorese would elect a representative council or an informal consultation with the East Timorese leaders. Furthermore, the author does not mention that Habibie's intention of solving the East Timor question once and for all in accordance with his interests in improving his international and domestic image as a democrat, might have been in some ways prejudicial to how most Indonesians saw their country's interests. It is also now known that, if necessary, and under certain guarantees, Portugal was prepared to accept a popular consultation *materially* organized not by the United Nations, but by Indonesia itself.

Habibie's timetable and his own political constraints meant that the United Nations had to accept less than perfect conditions to hold the popular consultation. The book describes in great detail the dilemma behind the security arrangements and the impossibility of compelling Indonesia to accept UN peacekeepers prior to the ballot. The decision to go ahead with the popular consultation in East Timor under Indonesian police supervision was to be greatly criticized later on. Martin convincingly explains why there was no other option. He then looks at the procedural details prior to the popular consultation. He explains why — owing to Indonesian demands that the ballot had to be held in August — UNAMET was confronted with a difficult timetable, the operational details behind its establishment, the reasons that led to the registration postponement, and the extension of the registration period. He also describes how, despite the efforts of several political actors, including the United Nations, the period from the May agreements until the popular consultation was marked by violence. Although Indonesia did not fulfill the security conditions required by the May agreements, the United Nations, supported by the pro-independence East Timorese and Portugal, decided to go forward with the registration and the ballot. Martin does not point out clearly the importance of this decision. In fact, with both decisions the United Nations was by itself interpreting and developing the May agreements. This was so because contrary to the requirements of the agreements, UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, never declared that there had been an achievement of the security

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conditions necessary for the registration process and to conduct the ballot.

The period between 4 and 10 September 1999 — from the day of the announcement of the ballot result until UNAMET's hasty withdrawal — is described in just four pages. Even though the book "is not a personal memoir" (p. 13), the treatment of this period could have been more detailed. Readers will almost certainly be interested to know in fuller detail the different views of the UN senior staff members — Martin included — about the best way to deal with what was going on in East Timor. Contrarily, he describes fully the international context leading to the establishment of the International Force East Timor (INTERFET) on 15 September 1999 (pp. 103–17). As a consequence, and despite the efforts of those who did everything to disrupt the popular consultation, in the end East Timor ceased to be part of Indonesia. This was achieved with a lot of bloodshed. Inevitably, the author has taken a few lessons from the UN involvement in this process. First, the United Nations "placed too much hope in the changes in [Indonesia's] military command" (p. 124). Secondly, the United Nations "underestimated the extent to which many Indonesians and pro-autonomy East Timorese still believed that the coercive autonomy campaign would be successful, or nearly successful" (p. 125). Thirdly, "the planning of Phase II came too late to strengthen UNAMET at the time this was most needed: the immediate aftermath of the ballot" (p. 126). Despite the cost in lives lost, and bearing in mind that the opportunity might not arise again in the future, like many others, Martin thinks that the window of opportunity was uniquely important. This reviewer shares this view, and although theoretically it makes sense to raise the pros and cons of whether the United Nations should have accepted Indonesia's offer to allow the popular consultation under controversial conditions, politically there was no other way out. Consequently, Indonesia's refusal to accept the presence of UN peacekeepers in East Timor before and after the ballot — which probably would have been able to avert the bloodshed — dictated that a vulnerable UNAMET was unable to prevent the spiral of violence.

One additional lesson proposed elsewhere to the United Nations, to take into account in similar situations in the future, is related to the role of the police and the military. Despite the organizational separation of the police from the military in Indonesia, in reality the police were not autonomous from the military. Therefore, it might have been more useful if the New York agreements had attributed to the military the responsibility for guaranteeing security before and after the ballot — a practice not followed by the United Nations, and possibly hard to accept by East Timor's pro-independence leaders. The reality is that, if

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accepted, it would not have allowed the military to hide behind the militias and to appear in the end as a remedy to police incompetence. Indeed, today, the military would not have the juridical arguments allowing them to claim their innocence since only with the introduction of martial law on 7 September did they become formally responsible for security.

None of the above leads Martin to regret his involvement in the process. He believes "that the achievement of self-determination for East Timor did great credit to the United Nations as an institution" (p. 14). Bearing in mind that the United Nations took twenty-four years to resolve the East Timor question, this claim might be controversial to some observers, especially among the activists of this cause. However, this and other critical views usually ignore the *realpolitik* considerations that occur in world politics.

The overall impression of this reviewer is that despite being a short book — there is much more to be said — Martin should consider the time he devoted to write it as well spent. Even though he does not bring to light unknown facts to an informed reader, he offers balanced and insightful views of the events in East Timor during 1999.

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***The Many Faces of Asian Security*. Edited by Sheldon W. Simon.** New York: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001. 259pp.

Once again, Sheldon W. Simon and his colleagues at the National Bureau of Asian Research have brought together a diverse group of authors who provide a wide-ranging and generally perceptive review of recent developments in East Asian security from a number of different angles. The impressive mix of academics, policy analysts, and practitioners furnish a carefully considered and often insightful set of essays which address many of the major security issues that have faced East Asia in the last few years. There is always a danger, however, that in commenting on current trends, events will overtake the analysis. The terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 in the United States have clearly changed the way the world looks at security and have had a major impact on Asian international relations. Much of the analysis of this book remains highly relevant, but there are a few places where the

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commentary has been side-swiped by the tragic events in New York and Washington.

In his introduction, Simon argues that the region is "searching for new principles of security" (p.1) in the face of a rapidly changing security environment. He deftly sets out the way in which the various chapters of the book illuminate this search in the context of the emergence of a new Asian security agenda. It has to be noted that the focus of the book is East Asia — Northeast and Southeast Asia — or what Simon calls the Asia-Pacific region. Despite the title of the book, readers should be aware that West Asia and South Asia are hardly mentioned. In the first chapter of the book, See Seng Tan, writing with Ralph A. Cossa, explores a fascinating tension in the theoretical work on East Asian security. Tan points out that the realist focus that has long characterized analysis of East Asian security is now being challenged by a constructivist turn. He appears to be arguing that, just as the English School of realism arose out of British and European practices with regard to international relations in general and security in particular, students of East Asian security should consider developing a distinctively East Asian approach to realism that is rooted in regional security practices. This is an approach that is well worth exploring and developing.

Simon's detailed overview of the state of the armed forces of the original five ASEAN members — Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand — as well as Japan in the wake of the Asian economic crisis raises a number of key questions. Importantly, he notes the increasing co-operation among intelligence agencies of the ASEAN members, the recent calls for a greater emphasis on ASEAN multilateral security, and the continuing need for U.S. forward military deployments in East Asia. Interestingly, in his chapter on technology and security in Asia, Paul Bracken suggests that the United States will find that maintaining a security presence in East Asia will be increasingly expensive as the armed forces of the region, especially those of China, deploy more technologically sophisticated weapons. The main message of his provocative chapter, that "the military geography of the region is changing" (p. 86), is persuasively set out.

In a chapter which presages the remaining analyses, Donald K. Emmerson looks at the issues which surround the broadening of the definition of security. Included under the rubric of security are an increasing array of threats to the state's well-being. Intersecting this expanding notion of security is a relatively constant view of sovereignty which is jealously guarded, especially by the governments of Southeast Asia. As Emmerson correctly points out, this is clearly something that analysts need to take into account. Subsequent chapters all explore

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significant aspects of the widening security agenda in East Asia. There is much of value in their analyses. Leif Rosenberger's examination of the economic dimension of security provides a good overview of recent economic events in the region, including the Asian crisis. In particular, his emphasis on the need for an assessment of the sequencing of economic reforms as economies are opened up strikes the right cautionary note. However, his tendency to see the Asian crisis as primarily the product of domestic problems is more likely to be challenged. Donald E. Weatherbee's careful recounting of the widespread environmental degradation in the region is a grim reminder that economic success, as much as poverty, creates potential security risks. Clark D. Neher provides an inventory of human rights abuses among key offenders in the region and examines the way in which the Asian crisis affected the drive towards democracy in Southeast Asia. His observation that America's push for greater democracy and respect for human rights — which tended to be overridden during the 1990s by economic interests in the case of China, and security interests in the case of Soeharto's Indonesia — has only been made more relevant by recent events. And John McFarlane's description of the activities of transnational criminal organizations and their impact on regional security makes a valuable contribution to the volume.

In their conclusion to the book, Richard H. Solomon and William M. Derennan underscore the American view that the continuing rivalry between China and Japan, and the triangular relationship among the United States, China, and Japan will continue to dominate the Asia-Pacific security agenda. They see China–Taiwan relations as the central issue. There is obviously much to be said for this analysis although, surprisingly, there is no mention of the increased willingness of the three Northeast Asian states — China, Japan and South Korea — to engage each other in discussions over more intensive economic co-operation. Nor is there any assessment of the importance of the emerging ASEAN Plus 3 (the ten ASEAN members and China, Japan and South Korea) co-operative arrangement which could provide a framework for discussions on a number of security issues, such as the South China Sea "Code of Conduct" or the tensions over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. In whatever way continued dialogue is achieved, the authors are quite correct in noting that no government in the region would like to see a return to the conflict-ridden times of only a few decades ago.

While the book makes a significant contribution to the literature on security in the Asia-Pacific region, its impact will be lessened somewhat by the fact that global security was changed dramatically by the events of 11 September 2001. The definition of security has, in

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Emmerson's terms, once again been narrowed. The concern is very much national security in a globalized world, in which direct attacks are now, as they were during the Cold War, seen as the primary and most imminent challenge. Certainly, issues such as the promotion of democratization, respect for human rights, and problems with environmental degradation appear, at least for the moment, to have been put on the back-burner. Moreover, given the new, fairly draconian, anti-terrorist legislation adopted in such countries as Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, the West no longer has the moral authority to criticize perceived abuses of human rights and the lack of progress in democratization in the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, West Asia is now very much on the U.S. radar screen and has to be factored into any discussion of the many faces of Asian security.

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Twenty-First Century World Order and the Asia-Pacific: Value Change, Exigencies, and Power Realignment. **Edited by James C. Hsiung.** New York: Palgrave, 2001. 390pp.

This book aims to provide an alternative way of explaining inter-state behaviour and the resultant global order at the dawn of the new century. While acknowledging the basic premise of the Westphalian logic, the editor of the volume, James C. Hsiung, declares that countries like China have the potential to "contribute to the reshaping of the world's systemic values, such as in the promotion of greater social justice internationally" (p. 8). Does this mean that between order and justice China takes the side of justice? What happens then to order? As a major power poised to become even more major, it cannot obviously leave that to chance. This is where one begins to wonder whether China, or for that matter Asian powers in general, could be all that different from their Western counterparts. One would have to say not exactly, and thus differ with the editor's claims.

In the immediate aftermath of decolonization, some Asian leaders like Nehru naively imagined that the new states of Asia would not fall prey to power politics of the sort that was practised by European states. Their relations, he concluded, would be based on mutual respect and

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peaceful co-operation. How soon he was proved wrong when India and China clashed on the Himalayan mountains in 1962 is too well known to bear repetition. That the newly independent states were as prone to the sins of their imperial masters became clear quite soon. Regional giants in most cases could not help but behave like giants, thus causing much agony to their smaller neighbours. Given this, to assume that China as an emerging superpower would do otherwise strains credulity. Furthermore, the editor invokes China's past as proof of its commitment to a different mode of external behaviour "based on the avoidance of brute power" and embracing the "power of suasion and exemplification" (p. 43). However, China has never made a secret of its pedagogical disposition, which was in full display when it taught a lesson to India in 1962 and to Vietnam in 1979. It certainly did not use the blackboard to impart those lessons. There is nothing unusual about such behaviour, however. What needs to be borne in mind is that the "Eastern Westphalia" is no different from the Western one, and what we are witnessing is a nascent greening of it. That is all.

Similarly, the claim that China never tried to export communism to other countries unlike the Soviet Union (p. 43) is also questionable. Those Southeast Asian states which were subject to communist insurgencies in the 1950s and 1960s might find it difficult to endorse this view.

Having said all this, this book does have its merits. An attempt has been made to draw on Asian perspectives regarding globalization and regionalization and the consequent tension between the two in the context of changing power configurations in the Asia-Pacific region. The other sections of the book consider inter- and intra-regional ties as seen between Europe and Asia, the Asia-Pacific and the Western hemisphere, and ASEAN regionalism.

Brian Bridges' depiction of ties between Europe and Asia ends on a note infused more with hope than conviction about the necessity for both regions to forge closer links and reach out to one another more seriously than they have done thus far. It is hard to quarrel with the author's observation that the relationship has been "a distant, irregular and lopsided one" (p.159). This is odd, considering the longstanding formal dialogue partnership that the European Union has enjoyed with ASEAN reaching back to the 1970s. Therefore, if nothing spectacular has happened in this relationship, it is precisely because there is very little that can draw the two sides closer. Obviously, their respective ties with the United States are far more salient to them than their own mutual relationship.

Greg Felker focuses on ASEAN's predicaments but feels confident that the Association will continue to remain a factor of consequence in

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Asia's international relations. This is decidedly a more optimistic view since the member-states themselves entertain a less than rosy picture. To use the past as a guide to project the future is problematic primarily because ASEAN performed wonderfully in the diplomatic realm at a time of exceptional circumstances. The challenges ASEAN has been facing recently has left it somewhat breathless. Since the multiple regional crises of the second half of the 1990s, ASEAN's record has been less than spectacular, which has hurt its image and credibility. Over-reliance on "soft power in the form of the ASEAN Way's familial consultations and consensus-based diplomacy" (p. 243) to ensure its effectiveness has clearly proved inadequate. However, this does not mean that the regional association has no utility or that it will cease to exist. Going by the observation that the nearest thing to immortality on earth is a government agency, one can confidently say that the same holds true for inter-governmental organizations.

Comprehensive security has received competent treatment in this book. Its conceptualization in the first chapter by the editor in terms of economic, environmental, and human security (pp. 26-34) is unambiguous. The chapters that discuss comprehensive security in the context of specific countries, such as the United States, Japan and China, provide valuable insights.

Davis B. Bobrow's analysis of America's views on Asia-Pacific security is fascinating. The domestic-level determinants of American foreign policy behaviour are fused with élite-level factors to give a comprehensive picture of the policy universe. Factors such as élite ideas, national capabilities comprising the economic and military dimensions, self-images, and perceptions about the others (p. 257) are regarded as the key variables shaping U.S. foreign policy behaviour. Relying on Gallup and other polls, the author is able to present a vivid picture of American self-images and images of others.

The scope of American foreign policy in Asia, according to this analysis, is likely to expand in terms of drawing in more countries within its purview. American interest will, however, predominantly revolve around economic and military issues, and only minimal attention will be bestowed on ecological and other human security issues. This is not an encouraging prospect but it generally reflects empirical reality. The Bush Administration's unilateral decision to step out of the Kyoto protocol is corroboration enough.

In his chapter on Japanese views on comprehensive security, Sueo Sudo traces the origins of the concept and the continuous emphasis it has received from Japanese policy-makers. According to the author, the ASEAN Regional Forum, a joint ASEAN–Japan initiative, was a product of this broadened concept of security. The chapter ends on a

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prescriptive note by suggesting a number of steps that might infuse more vigour into this project, thereby acknowledging that so far its impact has been minimal.

China's anxiety and its quest for security, as discussed by Richard Weixing Hu, is equally interesting. It alerts us to the prevailing unease among Chinese élites who recognize that comprehensive national power is no guarantee for comprehensive security. Beijing feels that it lacks the capacity to influence major powers and perceives that it has "very limited leverage over Washington" (p. 320). One of the main reasons for this perceived lack of influence and insecurity is the imbalance between "hard" and "soft" power, according to the author. The inevitable conclusion is: "China may have acquired more hard power to defend its national interest but it still lacks adequate soft power to manage favourable security relations..." (p.322), and unless it is blessed with both types of power its quest for security may remain elusive.

On the whole, this book ranges over many pertinent issues that are interesting in themselves but does not convince the reader that a significantly new global order, a product of the Asian genius, is about to emerge. Therefore, the brave conclusion that the "twenty-first century will be an era of peace and equity – and that the increasing global consciousness of this duality is, to put it mildly, related to the rising Asian participation in the life of the global village" (p. 371), seems somewhat overdrawn.

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Soldiers of Fortune: The Rise and Fall of the Chinese Military-Business Complex, 1978–1998. **By James Mulvenon**. Armonk, NY: M.S. Sharpe, 2001. 283pp.

Few people know the Chinese military as well as James Mulvenon, and one immediately senses that one is in the hands of an experienced guide when one opens this book. And what a story it is! Mulvenon is interested in the evolution of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) from a guerrilla force in the Maoist revolution to the wheeling, dealing business-savvy PLA of the 1980s, to the more professional military that appears to be taking shape in recent years. In particular, Mulvenon is interested in how the PLA is financed and what decisions about

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financial support for the military mean for the military and military–society relations.

Mulvenon starts from the beginning, both in terms of Chinese military traditions and comparatively, by giving a readable, broad-brush stroke treatment of the different ways militaries have financed themselves historically. Needless to say, the Chinese military is not the only one that has drawn resources for itself directly from the society it was allegedly protecting. Certainly, China's tradition of "military habituation" (*tuntian*), in which imperial armies obtained most of their food needs by farming the areas in which they were encamped, was of immediate relevance for Mao Zedong's guerrilla armies as they were trying to survive first in the mountainous areas of Jiangxi province, and then in the poor soil of northwest China around Yanan. Mao advocated a model of self-reliance, and General Wang Zhen's famous Nanniwan Brigade farmed, built simple industrial products, and cultivated opium. There has always been tension between the economic activities of the army and their military activities, as well as between corruption and their assigned mission as models of selfless, and self-sufficient, soldiers.

When Deng Xiaoping launched his reforms in the late 1970s, he faced a problem: the military portion of the budget (some 17 per cent) left too little for economic development purposes. In addition, as Deng pungently noted, the military was bloated and wasteful. Thus, Deng was determined to reduce the military budget and place the modernization of the military last among his four modernizations. Deng called on the military to be responsible for more of its own needs, and in 1983 he allowed the military to engage in a wide range of productive activities. This strategy led to surprising gains in the size and profitability of PLA enterprises. Mulvenon reports that between 1985 and 1990, profits grew 700 per cent. In the 1980s, in trying to reform its price system, China allowed for a "two-track" system: one price for goods in the plan and another for out-of-plan goods. That system allowed for considerable arbitrage as bureaucrats found that they could sell goods purchased at in-plan prices for higher out-of-plan prices. Thus, the military jumped into this loophole with considerable vigour. The most famous case of the time occurred in 1985 when the military was deeply involved in the smuggling of goods, such as automobiles, TVs, and VCRs from Hainan island to the mainland. Such corruption sapped the morale of the military and led the government to begin controlling the scope and adverse effects of business and corruption. Despite these efforts, military enterprises and profits expanded dramatically in 1986 (p. 64).

In the wake of the Tiananmen incident, after a period in which the

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PLA was concerned with disciplinary problems, the military turned once again to the task of rectifying the military-business complex. By the end of 1990, according to Mulvenon, the number of military-owned companies had been cut by 88 per cent (p. 71). This slowdown in the PLA's business activities, however, was reversed when the military supported Deng Xiaoping's "Southern Tour" in 1992. In early 1993, the military was reporting that business earnings could cover one-fifth of budgetary shortfalls (p. 73). As business activity increased, so did corruption, and again the military leadership stepped in to try to stop it. The PLA tried to curb military businesses and corruption by centralizing enterprises in large-scale conglomerates and reducing the number of PLA companies (pp. 75–76).

Mulvenon argues that corruption could not be isolated from military professionalism and thus deprived the military of many of the benefits of modernization. By 1998, China's leadership agreed. In July of that year, Jiang Zemin ordered the military to divest itself of its business enterprises. This was a decision that had actually been made a year earlier but was originally not supposed to take effect until 2000, so Jiang's speech was an acceleration of the original timetable (p. 177). There have been many rumours about civil–military conflict during this period, but Mulvenon is convinced that the military leadership, tired of corruption and its negative impact, largely supported the decision (p. 178).

How successful has this divestiture been? Good, but not perfect. Mulvenon reports that "2,937 firms of PLA and People's Armed Police were transferred to local governments and 3,928 enterprises were closed, with one-third at the central level and two-thirds at the local level" by the end of 1998 (p. 185). The greatest difficulty was witnessed in the telecommunications industry in which the military had a strong interest in maintaining companies that were involved in the global information revolution. In one case in Guangdong province, the military apparently engaged in a ruse in which a company was turned over to provincial authorities in name only, allowing the military there to continue to engage in commercial activities. Despite that and other problems, however, the process has been largely successful. The PLA is not "out of business" — it retains numerous small-scale enterprises and farms that will continue bolstering the incomes and living standards of personnel and their families at the local level. However, profit and international trade will no longer be key features of the military system in China (p. 194).

Although the process of divestiture has to be counted a success, it was not without friction. As company books came under scrutiny, corruption investigations were pursued aggressively and many high-

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level PLA officers fled abroad (p. 193). This has exacerbated civil–military relations, at least in the short run, but over the long haul it appears that China is building a better, more professional military. Although Mulvenon does not take up the subject of arms proliferation, one might conclude from his study that either such activity will be curbed or it will be more policy-oriented, and not just a matter of PLA companies free-lancing. This should bring greater clarity to at least one area of China's military activities. In general, the greater professionalization of the PLA that Mulvenon depicts in his story of divestiture should be good news as it means that over the long run China's military will be a more capable one.

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Contemporary Southeast Asia, Volume 24, Number 2, August 2002

Civilizing the Anarchical Society: Multilateral Security Processes in the Asia-Pacific

RON HUISKEN

The Asia-Pacific is in the early stages of the sort of strategic transformation that in the past had produced acute tensions, high levels of armament, and a significant risk of serious conflict. The region closely exemplifies Hedley Bull's "anarchical society", that is, states compete for power and influence in an international arena still relatively free of multilateral constraints. Trends in relations between the key major powers suggest that allowing security outcomes to be determined by the free play of the "security market-place" will be a high-risk strategy. A stronger determination to boost multilateral security processes, to take charge collectively, should be seen as a key element of a strategy to improve the prevailing odds attached to the security outlook for the Asia-Pacific.

Introduction

The Asia-Pacific has blossomed in recent decades. A steadily expanding number of regional countries began to record, and to sustain, very high rates of economic growth. By the mid-1990s, the Asia-Pacific had displaced the North Atlantic as the world's economic centre of gravity. The savage economic crisis of 1997–98 was the first significant blemish on this record in over thirty years. A recovery was evident from about 2000, although a full return to the earlier dynamism remains problematic.

It can be reasonably asserted that East Asia's economic performance from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s was grounded in widespread

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confidence in the strategic stability of the region. This article questions whether such confidence can be projected into the future. It concludes that the answer could well be no.

The Asia-Pacific is in the early stages of the sort of strategic transformation that in the past had produced acute tensions, high levels of armament, and a significant risk of serious conflict. Moreover, the Asia-Pacific closely exemplifies Hedley Bull's "anarchical society", that is, states compete for power and influence in an international arena still relatively free of multilateral constraints.[1]

The view that Asia would be the arena of greatest interest from the standpoint of the global strategic order has gathered strength inexorably over the course of the post-Cold War period. While other players will or could be important, three states — the United States, China, and Japan — dominate the scene and hold the key to whether or not the security landscape in Asia remains stable, positive, and resilient. A review of trends in the relationships between these key players suggests that allowing security outcomes to be determined by the free play of the "security market-place" is a high risk strategy.

The development of multilateral processes and mechanisms to help protect and strengthen stability in the Asia-Pacific is proceeding slowly. Multilateral machinery is being allowed to develop at a "natural" pace. Though defensible a decade ago, this attitude should now be seen as a potentially costly indulgence. The more tools at the disposal of policy-makers to help minimize and to manage the stresses of strategic transformation the better. A more determined and pro-active approach to the development of multilateral machinery should be seen as an urgent priority. Moreover, the onus of responsibility for this task must shift progressively towards the region's major powers.

Asia and the End of the Cold War

The extent and degree of U.S. pre-eminence is a critically important feature of the contemporary strategic scene. However, it does not make an examination of other strategic developments irrelevant or even premature. Indeed, the consolidation and extension of America's unipolar moment could make the inevitable accommodation of other strategic developments more stressful. This is more true of the Asia-Pacific than anywhere else. While other players will or could be important, the United States, together with China and Japan, will be decisive in shaping the security landscape in Asia. It is useful, therefore, to take a closer look at their evolving strategic outlooks and at the *consequences* of this evolution for the quality of relations between them.[2]

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United States

The unexpectedly sudden and emphatic victory in the Cold War left the United States starkly exposed as a state with global hegemonic capacities without precedent in modern times. The demise of the Soviet Union also robbed the United States of a clear sense of purpose. Being the sole superpower was a condition, and did not automatically suggest what one should do with it. Some serious work had gone on behind the scenes in 1990–91 to identify a mission suited to the circumstances in which the United States found itself. The prescription that emerged was that the United States could and should prolong these circumstances indefinitely by *preventing* any other nation or alliance from becoming a great power.[3]

Events — particularly the Gulf War and the 1992 election campaign — prevented this work from being developed to maturity. Importantly, however, the key players in this policy development process (not all equally attracted to the draft product) — Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Colin Powell, Condolezza Rice, Lewis Libby and, at one remove, Donald Rumsfeld — were to reassemble ten years later under President George W. Bush.

During the Clinton era, America had defied the widely forecast trend towards multipolarity, and had done so effortlessly. The U.S. economy took off on the longest period of sustained growth in decades and underpinned an emphatic confirmation of American pre-eminence. In addition, the United States took a great leap forward in the application of information technology to the business of war, adding a wholly new dimension to its extant military supremacy.

Two mutually reinforcing phenomena appear to have been at work. On the one hand, disproportionate power produced both pressures and temptations to widen the scope of international interests that the United States could protect and promote as core interests, that is, through means up to and including the use of force. On the other, the attractions of disproportionate power and the absence for the foreseeable future of any direct challenge led to a growing preoccupation with indirect or asymmetric challenges. The United States began to worry ever more seriously about how small and undeserving actors could sneak past its overwhelming strengths. As the singularity of the U.S. position sank in during the course of the 1990s, the tendency to wield power and to be able to protect and augment that power unilaterally gathered momentum.

The congressionally-mandated 2001 Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR) provided a key vehicle for the "old gang" to re-visit the work it had done in 1990-91 on defence policy and force posture. Though submitted on 30 September 2001 — and therefore totally overshadowed by the events of 11 September (9/11) — the review has clear intellectual

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roots in this earlier work. With respect to Asia, the thrust of the QDR is that U.S. primacy should become more clearly apparent in this region. U.S. resolve to ensure stability on the Korean peninsula is reaffirmed but the report makes clear that this old agenda will be pursued in parallel with the new. This new agenda is highlighted through the creation of a new region — the East Asia Littoral — running from "South of Japan through Australia into the Bay of Bengal". The report requires that U.S. forward-deployed and stationed forces be more widely dispersed to cope with contingencies across this vast new region, and that they be capable of doing so in all but extreme cases with minimal reinforcement from other regions or the continental United States.

The implicit focus of the East Asia Littoral — China — is referred to obliquely as a "possible competitor with a major resource base". This matches the Bush Administration's wider effort to take a more detached position on China — openly more doubtful that China will be a constructive player from the U.S. standpoint but not conceding in any way that China is or will soon be in the same league as the United States.

For two decades, the Soviet Union had provided a common interest for the United States and China sufficiently compelling to make all other issues quite secondary. With the demise of the Soviet Union, China's importance to the United States as a strategic asset withered. Instead, China became, quite abruptly, a strategic complication and, prospectively, a challenge to U.S. interests in Asia. Moreover, this shift in perspective occurred in the shadow of the violent suppression of dissent in Tiananmen Square on 4 June 1989. The era of the United States and China having to define new parameters for a long-term relationship opened with illusions dashed as well as realities transformed.

More than a decade later, the outlook is no less problematic. The basis for a stable, constructive relationship between the United States and China remains obscure. Indeed, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the relationship has not only been unstable, but that the sharp fluctuations have occurred around a declining trend. The balance of sentiment on both sides has shifted significantly in the direction of viewing the other party as a core problem rather than as a key part of the solution to their respective aspirations. A public opinion poll in 1997 found just 25 per cent of Americans prepared to label China a "friend" (with 36 per cent depicting it as an adversary and 39 per cent with no opinion). In 1983, the breakdown had been 52 per cent (friend), 21 per cent (adversary), and 27 per cent (no opinion).[4] Being labelled a "panda-hugger" in Washington became a synonym for limited career options.

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The Bush Administration, as noted, has delivered on its campaign promises to adopt a stance towards China that is harder, more demanding and more watchful. The Administration is of the view that a significant part of the problem is that the United States has taken China too seriously, reacting to what China might become in the relatively distant future rather than to what it is today and will be for quite some time yet. The Bush Administration seems more consciously determined not to concede peer status to China before it is absolutely necessary to do so. The past characterizations of the Washington–Beijing axis as the most important bilateral relationship in the world are no longer made or accepted in Washington. The relationship is important but those with U.S. allies, especially Japan, are conspicuously promoted. The youngest hegemonic state in history is seeking to adopt a loftier and more distant attitude towards the 1.3 billion people of the world's oldest civilization, and a civilization that has probably won and lost more empires than the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and Japan put together.

A strong measure of competition — including strategic competition — between the United States and China is probably inescapable and will simply have to be managed. However, the trend in U.S.–China relations holds significant risk that a deeper antagonism will take root and dispel hopes for a relatively positive security environment in East Asia over the longer-term.

China

China has been rising and falling at the centre of affairs in East and Central Asia for more than 3,000 years, at least since the Shang dynasty of 1450–1122 BC.[5] China now appears to be on the cusp of yet another resurgence. By 1990, it was quite clear that China would almost certainly become a transforming economic giant in East Asia. More than a decade on, China is essentially on track. Although it has problems to match its prospects, the only sensible projection is that China will dispose of increasingly formidable economic and therefore political influence, above all in East and Central Asia.

The size and character of China's armed forces are far less susceptible to projection than the major economic indicators. For one thing, China practises a degree of obfuscation and secrecy in this field that we have not seen among the major powers since the demise of the Soviet Union.[6] Even more important perhaps is that much depends on how the Chinese leadership views the role of (potential) force in achieving its aims. This includes, of course, their perceptions of whether others could and would use military force to frustrate these aims. It is certain that China's armed forces will modernize and diversify their

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capabilities, particularly in the direction of power projection or at least denial capacities in the areas close to China, with Taiwan and the South China Sea as concrete objectives. This expectation, however, leaves a great deal of flexibility in the magnitude, speed, and direction of modernization, particularly as sustained economic growth delivers more discretionary wealth to the central authorities.

As China and the United States began, more or less unconsciously, to test the parameters of their post-Cold War relationship, they discovered that the comparative harmony of the 1970s and 1980s had been lost.

In retrospect, it may well have been the case that China had inflated expectations. The factors contributing to such a frame of mind are not hard to discern. China had, after all, been a close strategic partner for twenty years, a good deal closer in fact than most people realized because the relationship had comparatively little visibility.[7] Moreover, with its particular historical baggage, and all the hype about the power it was expected to become, the Chinese leadership would have felt encouraged to reap earlier rewards and be more assertive about the role it expected to play. In addition, the United States appeared initially to be signalling that it intended to loosen its strategic grip on Asia. Planned reductions of its forces in Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK), and acceptance of the loss of its bases in the Philippines are cases in point.

What China appears not to have fully appreciated — and may indeed have been incapable of fully appreciating — was the extent to which the Tiananmen Square incident had transformed impressions of China, and the extent to which the demise of the Soviet Union would discount its importance to the United States in strategic terms. In any event, as the United States gradually absorbed the full implications of winning the Cold War and began to develop new policy bearings for the still strangely fluid post-Cold War era, it looked upon China with very different eyes. Far from being regarded as the co-determinant of the future order in Asia, Beijing found itself being regarded as a prospectively dangerous loose cannon lacking the disciplines of democracy, respect for human rights, and compliance with the established norms and conventions of international conduct in fields such as trade and non-proliferation of arms. The relationship began to be dominated by differences, above all the issues of Taiwan, human rights, and arms proliferation, both nuclear and conventional.

From Beijing's perspective, two developments in the late 1990s were seen as further graphic examples of America's disdain for China's interests. First, North Korea's launch of a rudimentary three-stage missile in August 1998 tilted the political balance in Washington on missile defence decisively in favour of a commitment to deploy. Even the

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limited deployment envisaged to cope with numerically small threats from "rogue" states like North Korea could readily be shown to have the theoretical capability to negate China's modest nuclear deterrent. In addition, the sea-based component of America's missile defences could be deployed to cover Taiwan. More to the point, China appears to be convinced that these possible outcomes in fact constitute the real motives behind the U.S. missile defence programme. Secondly, when China and Russia adamantly opposed intervention against Serbia over humanitarian concerns in Kosovo in the United Nations Security Council, the United States went ahead (with the support of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) without any form of UN authorization, and it accomplished its objectives. For China — with an eye to Taiwan, Tibet, and the separatist movement in its western Xinjiang province — any confidence that the United States could be relied upon to be a relatively benign hegemon effectively evaporated.

When the Bush Administration assumed office in January 2001, it essentially codified the preceding decade of difficulty and deterioration in U.S.–China relations. During the election campaign, it had bluntly characterized China as a strategic competitor. Once in office, it consciously took a more detached or aloof approach to China, signalling — as befits a superpower — that China was important but not especially important. Moreover, with no particular subtlety, the Administration flexed its muscles. In the delicate psychological game over Taiwan, President Bush took an early opportunity to stress U.S. obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act, implicitly demoting the three U.S.–China communiqués. The Administration followed up in April 2001 with the most generous arms package since 1992. As a State Department official put it in April 2002, "Taiwan is not looked at as a problem anymore. We look at it as a success story".[8] The status of this characterization was elevated when Secretary of State Colin Powell used precisely the same language in a speech in June.[9]

The Administration also accelerated and recast the missile defence programme in ways that made it an even more serious prospective challenge to China's nuclear deterrent. This development was reinforced by the U.S. decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, despite solemn warnings from China and Russia that this would weaken global stability. Finally, as noted earlier, the United States crafted a new defence policy and force posture that made Asia the region of primary interest and concern and, in contrast to the past focus on Korea, signalled U.S. determination to shape the security environment across the region as a whole.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 have at least delivered a pause. China spontaneously expressed its sympathies to the United

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States and indicated that it would support efforts to bring those responsible to justice. China has not reneged on this undertaking, but it has chosen to be cautious and discreet in doing so, in contrast to Russia and even Japan. Part of the reason for this may be that the United States has made it clear that it sees the war on terror as a self-contained issue. Bush's blunt declaration on 20 September 2001 — "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" — demanded co-operation on its merits and not in exchange for concessions on other difficulties that countries might have with Washington.[10] To this extent, when President Bush speaks of "a common danger erasing old rivalries", Beijing would appear to be erring on the side of caution rather than hope.[11]

Japan

The first decade of the post-Cold War era proved to be very difficult for Japan. China's power and influence in the region flourished on the back of its rampart economic growth. In contrast, the Japanese economy, its pre-eminent source of influence, settled into persistent stagnation, pointing ever more clearly to structural rather than cyclical causes. For a country that in the early 1990s was lobbying determinedly for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, Japan undoubtedly feels that it had lost a lot of ground by the time the twenty-first century arrived.

The experience of the 1990s appears to have progressively strengthened the view in Japan that a more comprehensive national capacity to protect and advance its interests was needed. A contributing factor in this regard may have been a re-appraisal of the alliance with the United States in the context of the more complex and fluid international arena that unfolded after the Cold War. Even with a U.S. relationship that was strong and dependable, the contention that Washington would — or even could — in these new circumstances give Japanese security interests close and careful attention must have been seen in Japan as increasingly unrealistic. The bigger factor, however, was undoubtedly the magnitude of the challenge that China was seen to pose to Japan's status and influence in the region and globally, and the fact that the bilateral relationship became increasingly difficult.

Japan–China relations were normalized in 1972 on the coat-tails of the U.S. opening to China. Relations remained generally harmonious, trade and investment links flourished, and opinion polls in both countries suggested reciprocally positive views. Japan began providing development assistance in 1979, mutually understood to be de facto reparations for the war. Nothing testing was attempted on the political or security fronts, reflecting, perhaps, a tacit understanding of the importance of presenting a solid front to the Soviet Union. When

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stripped of the insulation provided by the Soviet threat, however, and subject to the full weight of history and divergent current fortunes, the relationship began to slide downhill.

The Japanese are very conscious of the impact of the weight of history on Chinese perceptions. As a senior politician, Ichiro Ozawa, put it a few years ago: "The sense that China is the Middle Kingdom is very strong among the Chinese, and in that regard you might say that the sense of wanting hegemony is very much there."[12]

Furthermore, public perceptions of China in Japan were badly damaged by the suppression of student protesters in Tiananmen Square in 1989. Together with China's continued rampant economic growth (contrasting ever more graphically with a virtual standstill in Japan), and its assertiveness in the South China Sea, on Taiwan and over island territories claimed by Japan, Japan's perspective on China became less sanguine.

Japan's unease about China deepened during the second half of the decade. The drive in Beijing to encourage nationalist sentiments — widely interpreted as a response to the declining legitimacy of communist ideology as a basis for the State's authority — included giving greater prominence to Japan's invasion of China in the 1930s and the atrocities committed during the occupation. The persistent stagnation of the Japanese economy threatened to erode the foundation of Japan's power and influence, and undoubtedly added to a developing sense of insecurity.

In reciprocal fashion, Japan's evident resolve to build a more level playing field on which to contest China's growing influence, attracted strong criticism from Beijing. The security declaration in April 1996 reaffirming the alliance with the United States, and the revised guidelines on the assistance Japan could render to U.S. forces in "situations in areas surrounding Japan other than an attack on Japan itself" were early examples. Japan's agreement to formal collaboration with the United States in research on ballistic missile defences (following the launch by North Korea of a three-stage missile in August 1998) attracted the same treatment.

Further developments are clearly in the pipeline. In October 2000, a report prepared by an influential and bipartisan group of Americans (several of whom now hold senior positions in the Bush Administration) boldly declared that the U.S.–U.K. relationship should be a model for the U.S.–Japan alliance.[13] It also stated bluntly that the Japanese prohibition on collective self-defence should be lifted to permit more efficient security co-operation. Prime Minister Koizumi has since advocated that this issue be reviewed, and Japan's 2001 defence White Paper takes the same position. The evolution in Japanese thinking on

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this issue was illustrated by the Diet's quick agreement in October 2001 to dispatch support vessels to the Indian Ocean during operation "Enduring Freedom", contrasting sharply with Japan's paralysis during the Gulf War ten years earlier.

As with the United States, the Japan–China relationship has become more complex and watchful during the decade since the Soviet Union provided a common focus strong enough to smother other concerns. One Japanese assessment of developments in this relationship is that the two countries "have boosted their sense of incompatibility".[14]

Boosting Multilateral Management

The foregoing discussion suggests that the existing security arrangements in Asia have to evolve to accommodate the emergence of not one but at least two additional large players. One of these, China, has been the focus of attention. This is entirely appropriate as China has dominated the region for millennia but in modern times was essentially a non-player until just two decades ago, and a player of certain consequence, both actual and potential, for perhaps half this time. It is now time, however, to recognize that there is a significant additional dimension to this challenge, namely, the implications of Japan being drawn out and seeking greater autonomy in the promotion of its political and security interests.

Assuming, first, that China stays roughly on its present trajectory, and that Japan both re-ignites its economy and continues to move towards normalcy as a security actor, then Asia will confront the unfamiliar phenomenon of both these countries being strong and active at the same time. One of the better-supported propositions in international relations is that the disruption of an established order by the rise of a new player brings heightened risks of instability and conflict. The established players resent and resist having to make way for the upstart, and mutual unfamiliarity increases the scope for miscalculation. It is, therefore, no surprise that, early in the post-Cold war era, analysts identified Asia as having the greatest potential for serious inter-state conflict.[15] Nor has the passage of time diminished this concern. In 2000, for example, the Armitage/Nye Report on Japan cited earlier, and a CIA-sponsored assessment, continued to rank Asia in this way.[16]

If the thrust of the assessments presented above is broadly accurate, the possibility that the adverse trends in the core regional security relationships will harden into geostrategic patterns must be regarded as very real.[17] The likelihood of major war may be lower but it will remain higher in Asia than elsewhere.[18] What we can more confidently expect

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is a prolonged period in which the development of military capabilities is given a high priority, and that this process will become both steadily more interactive and more complex as additional players are drawn in. Tension and suspicion will become more entrenched in relationships within the region, and political energies will be skewed towards conflict avoidance and crisis management, to the relative neglect of constructive and collective approaches to common problems.

The realist prescription is that the struggle for power in the anarchic international arena will see ebbs and flows, crises and conflicts but, eventually, it will develop the impulses to build a more stable order.[19] An alternative prescription, also realist, contends that characteristics singular to Asia and Asians allow more optimism about how quickly and painlessly Asia can arrive at a stable order.[20] These distinctive prescriptions are of course overdrawn, but it is likely that they lurk in the background, shaping views about what is necessary or desirable or feasible in the way of broad security policy settings for the region.

Both prescriptions spell trouble for the region. Accepting the fatalism of the realist school would represent an abrogation of political leadership. Similarly, the optimism of the "Asia is special" school should by now be seen as misplaced. Better collective outcomes are within reach but it is most unlikely that the free operation of the region's international system will deliver them. Deliberate intervention, consciously forging more desirable outcomes, is necessary.

Very obviously, this refers to multilateral processes focused on the objective of attenuating the instinct to address security concerns unilaterally through the accumulation of military capabilities. It is important, immediately, to stress the limits of multilateralism. Just as the command economies learnt that banishing market forces was an exercise in futility, multilateral security processes must work within the realities of the extant and prospective relative strategic weight of states in the grouping. Similarly, no imaginable development of multilateralism in Asia can significantly displace the elemental instinct that states have to deter or defend themselves against perceived threats. This is another way of saying that bilateral relationships, especially those between the major powers, will continue to be fundamental in shaping the quality of the regional security environment. In Asia in particular, multilateral processes can do no more than complement the mosaic of bilateral relationships.[21]

Multilateral security processes can, however, be a crucial civilizing influence on the operation of the anarchic international system. This is true even of the initial, exploratory processes that we must accept as the limit of what is feasible in the region at the present time. There is a fine line between the circumstances that a community of states would

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regard as a positive and robustly stable security environment and one that is seen as troubling, unpredictable, and necessitating stronger precautionary investment in the armed forces. It is essentially impossible for anyone in such a community to say where that line is. Knowing when the line has been crossed is generally easier. The historical experience has been that, hard though it may be to stay behind the line, backtracking after it has been crossed is harder still.

Needless to say, no claim to originality is being made here. The region, or at least many of its medium and smaller states, decided in 1993 to create a forum specifically to discuss security issues.[22] The resultant ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which held its first meeting in 1994, was a bold initiative. For the reasons canvassed above, Asia's sense of community was not well developed and the notion of addressing the sensitive issue of security in a multilateral forum was approached with considerable hesitation. Crucially, however, the ARF attracted the participation of every state that mattered. Several characteristics of the ARF contributed to its successful launch. It was helpful, for example, that most states had had some exposure to the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference process which would have given them confidence in ASEAN's caution and moderation. Similarly, casting the forum as an arena for discussion on security issues at the political level (among foreign ministers), and indicating that the agenda and all ARF statements would be subject to the consensus principle would have provided additional reassurance that the forum could be managed.

A more subtle, but critical, characteristic of the ARF was that it was a forum launched by ASEAN for the purposes of influencing the postures the major powers, especially China, adopted towards Southeast Asia. In other words, it was launched by ASEAN for ASEAN. For the other participants, there has been the sense of being invited, of being the guests of ASEAN. This is critical because, although the ARF has moved in the direction of becoming a truly regional body, that movement has been modest. Some consideration is now being given to changes in the management of the ARF that might accelerate this transformation, but these changes are being pursued cautiously and without much in the way of political priority or urgency. What this amounts to is that, for the foreseeable future, the authority of the ARF will essentially remain limited to the authority of ASEAN. The Association is an important entity on the political and security landscape of Asia but it is not, and will not become, one of the principal forces shaping that landscape.

There is the view that there is a rough consensus in the region on the political space available for the multilateral consideration of security issues, and that the ARF fills that space. There is also the view that the

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ARF can and will develop to provide all the multilateralism in the field of security that the region requires. The thesis of this article is that both these views should be contested. The security outlook for the region is one of great challenge and complexity. The interdependence of security interests and concerns among the Asia-Pacific states is strong and growing stronger. Moreover, the only reasonable conclusion to draw from the experience of the past decade is that the region is not managing these challenges particularly well. To the contrary, the trends are disturbingly adverse. The machinations of the "anarchical society" appear to be getting the upper hand. As Paul Dibb observed in 1996, "an Asia that depends solely on a balance of power ... and on the defence preparations of individual states will not necessarily be a stable region that manages strategic change in an orderly manner".[23] Similarly, one of the principal architects of the Track Two process, Desmond Ball, concluded in 1997 that, while progress on multilateral security co-operation in the Asia-Pacific had been extraordinary, its "impact on the regional geostrategic architecture remains marginal, and it is quite likely that it will fail to match some of the more negative possibilities, including major regional conflict".[24]

Many in Southeast Asia still hold the view that ASEAN must remain at the helm of the ARF to prevent it from being dominated by the major powers. This is a defensible position if the ARF's remit is confined to Southeast Asia. If it purports to be a security mechanism for the Asia-Pacific — and it does — it must face up to the fact that the United States, China, Japan, Russia, and India are also integral members of this region. The likelihood that these states will dominate the ARF should not be viewed as a risk. It is something that must happen if the process is to have any chance of becoming genuinely influential.

A stronger determination to take charge collectively should be seen as a key element of a strategy to improve the prevailing odds attached to the security outlook for the Asia- Pacific. In particular, the major powers must be persuaded to acknowledge the interdependence of their security interests and to develop processes that allow this interdependence to be more systematically exposed and addressed. Bilateral relationships may be of dominant importance but they will not capture the full complexity of intersecting security interests within the region. A multilateral forum, moreover, is inherently more public and transparent or, in a word, more democratic. Participating states will certainly be more circumspect in a multilateral forum, especially in the early stages, but the element of democracy tends to have a valuable dampening influence.

Given the stakes involved, the further development of multilateral consideration of security issues in the Asia-Pacific should be seen as

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involving the highest authorities, that is, heads of state, and as bearing the authority of the major powers. The region already has in the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum a process that fulfils one of these criteria. Heads of state from the region have been meeting annually in APEC for over a decade. Regrettably, the formal purpose of these meetings is limited to trade and related economic issues, a constraint that testifies to the unfamiliarity with, and suspicions about, multilateral processes that characterized the region in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The informal discussions at APEC meetings have for some time been more wide-ranging. Occasionally, this has been acknowledged openly. In 1999, for example, a key topic was East Timor, and in 2001 it was the response to terrorism.

In formal terms, however, it remains the case that regional heads of state meet to discuss an agenda that properly belongs to trade ministers. This is a waste of a scarce resource. A priority objective must be to give this annual gathering of leaders the authority and responsibility to address all of the broader forces shaping the character of the region, including developments in the field of defence and security. It would be reasonable to expect such a leaders' forum to endorse the ARF (reformed to loosen ASEAN ownership) and APEC as the specialized fora for security and trade respectively. In the case of the ARF, this would provide a decisive boost to its stature and authority.

A development along these lines could be described as a piece of strategic preventive diplomacy. It would provide the Asia-Pacific with a valuable additional tool with which to shape a future that does not involve the prevailing security trends hardening into geostrategic patterns. ASEAN displayed commendable statesmanship in launching the ARF and getting it to its present stage of development. A second act of statesmanship is now called for, namely, to require the major powers of the Asia-Pacific to accept equal responsibility for its further development.

The importance of ensuring that this development is embraced and driven by the major powers does not preclude concerted advocacy and lobbying by other states to secure this outcome. After all, the middle and smaller powers of the region are arguably the most vulnerable to any serious deterioration in the regional security environment that results from the free operation of the dominant strategic forces in the security market-place. These middle and smaller powers have the most to gain from some capacity to modify the operation of the security market. They should be prepared to require of the major powers that the regional strategic order be shaped deliberately through discussion and accommodation, to be as far as possible a matter of brains as well as brawn.

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Whose Agenda? "Partnership" and International Assistance to Democratization and Governance Reform in Indonesia

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This article examines the Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia, described as "an innovative co-operation arrangement among the Indonesian government, civil society organizations, the private sector and Indonesia's international development partners". It inquires into "whose agenda" prevails. Is there genuine "national ownership", with subordination of external activities to locally-devised reform strategies, as claimed? Alternatively, is "partnership" merely the latest ploy to disguise international intervention and simultaneously accord it greater legitimacy? Such questions are addressed by two means: first, by exploring whether the Partnership's reform agenda coincides with the main challenges to sustained democratization in Indonesia; and secondly, by examining the structure and activities of the Partnership and whether Indonesian or international influences predominate.

Introduction

The fall of President Soeharto in May 1998, after thirty-two years of authoritarian rule, afforded the opportunity for international actors to become involved in processes of political reform in Indonesia. In particular, "governance reform" has become a top priority for the multilateral and bilateral development agencies. The most high profile of such activities has been the recently established Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia (hereafter referred to as the Governance

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Partnership, or just Partnership). Initiated by three multilateral organizations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Governance Partnership was publicly launched in October 2000.[1] It is presented as a "partnership" between "national stakeholders and the international community",[2] and would appear to be globally unique in two respects. One entails the degree of co-ordination by international donors and lenders on issues of democracy and governance in a single country. The other, conversely, is the ostensible Indonesian control of the Partnership, through majority Indonesian participation on the Governing Board.

Based on this apparent incongruity, this article examines "whose agenda" of political reforms prevails in the Partnership's activities. Is it a locally-devised reform strategy, consistent with the claims of "national ownership"? Or, alternatively, do the international agencies continue to dominate the agenda, though concealed behind the guise of "partnership"? If the latter, what are the motivations of external actors and whose interests are being met? Thus, the article pursues two related themes. First, it investigates whether the Partnership's agenda for governance reform is one that is consistent with or diverges from an analysis of the main issues for sustained democratic reform in Indonesia. Secondly, through an examination of the structure and activities of the Governance Partnership, the notion of "partnership" is explored, and whether Indonesian or international influences are predominant. Conclusions drawn are that agenda-setting remains in the hands of the powerful international institutions and that their motives are driven more by interests in economic liberalization than democratization.

The article is in three main parts, in addition to this introduction and a brief conclusion. The first part outlines the key issues of, and challenges to, sustained democratization and improved governance in contemporary Indonesia. Such issues are those perceived by the authors, though distilled from the views of a range of commentators, drawn from secondary sources and interviews. The second part outlines the structure and priority activities of the Governance Partnership. The third section brings these together and poses key questions concerning the nature of the Governance Partnership. What differences can be perceived between the challenges to democratization in Indonesia outlined here and the reform priorities of the Partnership? Can it be described as a genuine "partnership", or does its agenda remain externally-driven?

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Democratization and Good Governance: Issues and Challenges in post-Soeharto Indonesia

In this section, seven key issues are outlined, perceived as crucial to the prospects for sustained democratic reform in Indonesia. As an introduction, the concepts of democratization and good governance in the context of post-Soeharto Indonesia are briefly examined.

Democracy is not a strange concept for Indonesians, although it has been interpreted in different ways on past occasions. Soeharto himself employed the notion of "Pancasila Democracy", claimed as a form of democracy based on the five principles of Pancasila, rather than on Western liberal democracy. In *Demokrasi Pancasila*, three political parties were allowed to compete in elections, but with Soeharto's party, Golkar, always gaining the majority of parliamentary seats. It was an exercise in the manipulation of "popular legitimacy", intended to demonstrate that Soeharto had the support of the people to rule the country. As elsewhere, the concept of good governance is relatively new in Indonesia, though one that has gained a certain currency, stimulated in particular by the public campaign against KKN, an abbreviation for *Korupsi* (corruption), *Kroniisme* (cronyism) and *Nepotisme* (nepotism), seen as characterizing Soeharto's regime. Good governance is often simply understood as "clean government", or *pemerintahan yang bersih dari KKN* (government which is "free" from *KKN*). Indeed, some new non-governmental organizations, such as the Indonesian Transparency Society (Masyarakat Transparansi Indonesia or MTI) have focused their attention on governance issues, supporting democracy and good governance, seen as two sides of the same coin.[3]

Below are examined seven critical issues of democratization and good governance which have been the subject of debate and public discussion in Indonesia, inclusive of dealing with the legacies from Soeharto's personalized pyramid of power.

Military Reform

Establishing civilian supremacy over the military is a core aspect of democratization and an important agenda item for Indonesia.[4] It is also a particular challenge in the Indonesian context, given the military's retained strength and power from the Soeharto era, as well as the enduring doctrine of *dwifungsi* (dual function), where the military acts both as the agent of security and defence and an important social and political force. Under *dwifungsi*, the Indonesian military (TNI) became the backbone of Soeharto's authoritarian regime,[5] with its officers

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exerting its influence in all aspects of daily life, playing an important role in establishing the overall state ideology, determining various strategic policies, and securing all Soeharto's initiatives, including by repression. Military officers occupied key positions in public offices, including in the two-tier legislature, the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (House of Representatives, or DPR) and the Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly or MPR). Nearly all provinces were headed by governors with military backgrounds.[6] Military officers were also appointed to head *kabupaten* (districts), while others were made directors of state corporations. This socio-political role generated uniformity in society and sought to eradicate liberal ideas of pluralism and difference. In a more traditional role, the TNI were also responsible for the elimination of opposition to Soeharto's leadership and policies, with human rights abuses often rationalized in terms of the need to maintain political stability and the unity of the nation.

In the post-Soeharto period, the TNI continues to be a significant political force. It maintains its position at the centre of power and there remains the possibility of a reversal of democratization towards authoritarianism through its interventions. It retains thirty-eight uncontested seats in the House of Representatives (DPR) until 2009 at least, confirmed by the decision of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) in August 2000, and continues to have its officers appointed to strategic ministerial posts.

Following the fall of Soeharto, the worsening situation of disorder in many parts of the country has also allowed military personnel to play a leading role in restoring security and stability, and accordingly endows them with a key position in politics generally. The military has been strengthened further since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, perceived by international actors, notably the U.S. Government, as key to the suppression of militant Islamic groups in the world's largest Muslim nation.

Democratization in Indonesia, as elsewhere, requires the supremacy of civilian control over the military, and reform of the TNI remains a top priority for many pro-democratic actors, notably new non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Military Watch.[7] Similarly, INFID, the International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development, asserts as "a matter of priority" the need to:

> Uphold and maintain civilian supremacy over the military, and to that end eliminate the military's political role in the legislative, executive and judicial function of the government, as well as the military territorial system.[8]

Some positive efforts at military reform have been made, such as the separation of the TNI and the police. However, the general reluctance

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of the military to limit itself to its professional role in security and defence matters, as well as its reluctance to co-operate in the investigations of former human rights abuses (see below), places the commitment to further reform in doubt.

Dealing with the Past: Human Rights Abuses and Corruption

A closely related issue is that of human rights violations by the security forces (military and the police). Dealing with past human right abuses is vital with respect to issues of justice and reconciliation, themselves key requirements for democracy building. There have been numerous demands for the investigation of various past incidents of state violence, going back at least to the 1984 "Tanjung Priok" incident in Jakarta, where dozens were reported killed and injured in clashes between the military and Islamic groups. People in Aceh have demanded the investigation of massacres during the implementation of the Military Operation Zone policy from 1989 to 1998. Supporters of the PDI-P have also called for a thorough investigation of the 1996 "Bloody July" incident, where the military was allegedly involved in forcibly taking over the party's headquarters, with dozens killed and hundreds injured. Investigations of human rights abuses during the democratic transition period are also demanded, for example: the May 1998 Jakarta riots in which it is alleged that military personnel were involved in instigating the disorder, mayhem, and sexual crimes that accompanied the fall of Soeharto; the May 1998 Trisakti and November 1998 Semanggi incidents in which students and others were killed while demonstrating for democratic reforms. Finally, appropriate legal action is demanded against the perpetrators of the wholesale killing and destruction in East Timor, surrounding the August 1999 referendum on independence, in which pro-Jakarta militias were backed by the Indonesian military and police.

A number of independent commissions of inquiry into such incidents of state violence have occurred, notably in Tanjung Priok, incidents in Aceh, the May 1998 Jakarta riots, and the post-referendum events in East Timor, and legislation (Law 26/2000) was eventually approved by the DPR in March 2001 to establish a human rights tribunal. Nonetheless, despite the serious efforts of such independent commissions into human rights violations, there have been few instances of appropriate follow-up legal action taken by the government. In February 2002, the first steps were taken to indict seven senior officials, including three army generals, for human rights crimes committed in East Timor in 1999, in what would be Indonesia's first human rights trial.[9] It is probably not coincidental that the East Timor case has provoked the most international condemnation, including a ban by the U.S. Congress on military assistance to Indonesia, with its lifting

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specifically requiring the prosecution of those responsible for the human rights violations in 1999. One commentator remains pessimistic, however, stating that bringing those to justice for past human rights abuses is "taking an interminably long time, and now seems to be slowly losing momentum".[10] This is explained precisely as due to the lack of military reform: "even in the age of democracy, ... ultimate supremacy, and therefore impunity, still remains with the military".[11]

The widespread corruption in the past is another issue of great concern among Indonesians. There has been considerable public demand for the investigation of corruption, particularly that of Soeharto, his family, and cronies. Many argue that the prospects for future "clean governance" are limited unless there is a thorough investigation into past corrupt practices. Indeed, incidences of corruption have continued, with new scandals involving the new ruling élites, notably Presidents Habibie and Wahid. Such high-profile cases represent only the "tip of the iceberg", however, with corruption at all levels of government still rampant in the post-Soeharto period.

Constitutional Reform

Constitutional reform is another crucial issue. The current constitution remains that formulated during preparations for independence, the Undang Undang Dasar (UUD) of 1945.[12] There are strong arguments that Indonesia needs a new constitution to provide a legal framework for establishing the basic rules and functions of a democratic state and its institutions. Hitherto, the UUD of 1945 has permitted the state to be influential in all aspects of social and political affairs, rather than enabling society to participate in public life through representative democracy.[13]

The demands for constitutional amendments, or, alternatively a wholly new constitution, have gained public support since the reform era began in 1998. At its first general session in October 1999, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) issued a decree to instigate a constitutional reform process (No. IX/MPR/1999), scheduled for completion by August 2000. Consequently, a working committee in charge of amending the constitution was established, with its proposals for new and amended articles deliberated in subsequent general and annual sessions of the MPR.[14] As a result, the MPR has agreed on the amendment of a number of articles, while other proposals remain subject to considerable debate and disagreement.[15] Additionally, there are wider questions with regard to the process and the content of constitutional reform, which are addressed in turn.

First, who has the authority to amend the constitution and what degree of public participation should there be? The Constitution of

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1945 clearly states that the MPR has the authority to undertake constitutional amendments. However, criticism has emerged in response to the conflicts among MPR members, with ongoing debates on constitutional reform perceived as reflecting MPs' vested interests rather than the national interest. At times, advocacy or opposition to particular proposals seem driven by pragmatic considerations aimed at electoral victories, rather than by the important task of producing a legal base for a new Indonesia. Furthermore, there is the question of public participation in the process, with proposals for the establishment of an independent committee for constitutional amendment, consisting of legal experts and intellectuals whose credibility is beyond reproach. It is proposed that such a committee would conduct an open process of consultation, aimed at accommodating public opinion on the central issue of reform. Yet, such proposals have been strongly rebutted by the MPR, arguing that it is mandated to undertake the reform process by the UUD of 1945 and that the formation of a constitutional committee will in fact violate the constitution.

Secondly, should the constitution be amended or completely rewritten? The MPR has agreed not to amend the preamble of the constitution, and has focused on amendments to articles in the main body. It is questioned, however, whether amendment is sufficient to produce a constitution that guarantees democratization and good governance, given that many new articles (such as on human rights, the military, and the media) are required. For instance, the leader of a prominent NGO coalition (Koalisi Ornop) has argued that, "If Indonesia commits to build democracy, supremacy of the law and good governance, the UUD of 1945, the First Amendment and the Second Amendment must be changed by a new constitution."[16] Similarly, the Indonesian Transparency Society (MTI) states that the current constitution specifically restricts the growth of democracy in Indonesia, and that wide-ranging constitutional amendments are required in five areas: the sovereignty of the people; human rights; the government's power; Parliament's power; and judicial affairs.[17] Furthermore, other leading NGOs in the legal field have stressed the importance of including respect for and protection of human rights in a new constitution.[18]

Therefore, although many Indonesians believe that constitutional reform is necessary for furthering overall democratic reform, there is limited progress to date, with little prospect that the MPR will be able to complete the reform process by August 2002, as scheduled. Many Indonesians see the slow motion of reform as evidence of a reluctance on the part of the major political parties to support not only particular amendments but also constitutional reform in general.[19] In turn, this generates political uncertainty and undermines the prospects for

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ongoing democratization, given the lack of the required constitutional framework.

Central and Local Government

The relationship between central and local government has constituted a perennial problem in Indonesia.[20] Local governments have had very limited authority to take their own initiative in response to local problems and demands, with the centre playing a dominant role. This relationship was often characterized by the exploitation of local resources, with local governments unable to develop their own regions and human resources. In post-Soeharto Indonesia, this relationship has generated tension, with some provinces demanding greater autonomy to develop their regions. In Aceh and West Papua (formerly Irian Jaya), in particular, this tension has led to separatist movements demanding the establishment of independent states.

The new decentralization laws that came into effect in January 2001 (Laws No. 22 and 25, 1999), were introduced to respond to these mounting pressures, especially from the resource-rich provinces. Law No. 22, on regional autonomy, entails the delegation of authority to the district level by the central government in eleven areas, including health, education, co-operatives, forestry, trade, agriculture, and mining, while the central government maintains its authority in foreign affairs, defence, the economy, justice, and religious affairs. Districts also have control over general mining activities, including gold and copper, but not over oil, gas, and radioactive substances. Law No. 25, on fiscal balance, provides district authorities with greater powers of taxation and revenue raising.

Greater autonomy through new decentralization laws is certainly important to increase the participation of local people in both economic and political development. However, there are serious difficulties and challenges which may hinder democratization at both national and local levels. The first is that each province has its own characteristics and is at a different stage with regard to its readiness for autonomy, particularly because of the widespread lack of managerial and planning capacity at the local government level.[21] There is a wide gap between provinces in Java and those outside Java, as well as between provinces richly imbued with natural resources and those without. This has the potential to generate wider gaps between these different regions if there is no central authority to regulate differences. Secondly, while district authorities have gained in power and responsibility, the higher-level provincial authorities are reduced in function to a co-ordinating agency. Apparently, central government is not willing to cede power to those

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authorities with jurisdiction over larger geographical territories, potentially posing more of a threat. Thirdly, greater local autonomy and the increased desirability of political posts at the local level may lead to a widening of corruption, especially if local government itself lacks transparency and there is an insufficiently developed civil society to monitor local government and hold it to account. Already there is evidence of the greater use of "money politics" in leadership elections (for *bupati* and *walikota*), buying the support of local council members.[22] Such adverse effects for democratization arising from decentralization seem to have received scant attention from the central government and international agencies. One area of focus could be on how to empower civil society in local areas, making local government more accountable to the local people.

Checks and Balances

A system of checks and balances is designed to enhance the accountability of government. The Soeharto regime lacked such a system. There was no room for independent opposition parties, a critical mass media, or responsible legislative bodies. Soeharto exerted his control over the establishment of political parties, often intervening in parties' internal structures by appointing his own nominees for party leadership. Soeharto also controlled the mass media, with censorship an instrument to ensure its compliance, leaving it unable to reveal abuses of power. Both the DPR and the MPR were widely known as rubber stamps of Soeharto's own initiatives, while other state institutions, such as the BPK (the Finance Audit Council) and the DPA (Advisory Council) also failed to play their constitutional role in holding government to account.

Therefore, democratization in this area involves strengthening these various mechanisms of checks and balances. Undoubtedly, there have been positive developments in the post-Soeharto period, while concerns remain. Perhaps most significantly, there has been a redefinition of the role of the legislature, which is now more actively monitoring the performance of the executive. Yet, somewhat contrarily, there has almost been a reversal, with the executive appearing weak in comparison with Parliament. During the Wahid administration, the conflict between the executive and legislative became unbridgeable, with the political élite failing to accommodate their differences. While there is now greater emphasis on the accountability of the executive, there emerges a question of the accountability of legislative bodies. In addition, the media has gained relative freedom of expression, enabling them to participate more actively in overseeing the performance of the government. However, questions remain concerning the fairness, objectivity and

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neutrality of the media, often itself subject to criticism for its lack of a code of ethics, with the potential to generate social and political tensions through unsubstantiated information and analysis.

Legal Reform and Law Enforcement

During the three decades of authoritarianism, the legal system was very weak and vulnerable to intervention by political power-holders. The system served the interests of the rulers and failed to protect the ruled from the abuse of power, with bribery frequently playing a significant role in the outcome of legal cases. The demise of authoritarianism has been accompanied by an increase in awareness of such abuses, further undermining the legal system and the reputation of law enforcement agencies.

Thus, with legal institutions having lost their credibility in the eyes of society, legal reform constitutes a clear priority of democratization efforts. Reforms include those directed at the law enforcement agencies, the police, prosecutors and the courts, encouraging their commitment to implementing the due process of law. In this manner, the legal system could begin to regain public respect. There are also counter tendencies, however. The increase in social unrest, notably the range of ethnic and religious conflicts, is itself not conducive to implementing reform processes. The new ruling élite also continues to negatively influence prospects for legal sector reform, exploiting the law to manoeuvre against political opponents. Former President Wahid, for example, often stated that he would pardon Soeharto for his past wrongdoings, even if proven guilty in court, demonstrating a lack of commitment by the élite itself to the rule of law in the new era.

Political Instability and Conflict

Political instability is another difficult challenge for democratization and good governance, with the end of the Soeharto era signalling the rise of a number of conflicts. The demands for independence have intensified in Aceh and West Papua, with the upsurge of armed separatist movements highlighting the worsening crisis of national identity.[23] Intense ethnic and religious conflicts have also emerged in West Kalimantan, Batam, Ambon, Kupang, and several other places.[24] In Ambon and Kalimantan, thousands were reportedly killed after indigenous people clashed with migrants. Religious differences have been exploited by extremists, with churches and mosques targeted with bomb attacks. Following the demise of Soeharto's authoritarian rule, Indonesia has been encountering a difficult situation in which the rise of ethnic and religious intolerance raises the spectre of national disintegration. Clearly, this constitutes a grave danger to prospects for democratic development — simply, no Indonesia, no democracy.

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The Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia

Attention is now turned to the Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia. Although established relatively recently, it provides a good example by which to explore the role of international actors in promoting democratization and governance reform, and the question of "whose agenda" prevails, given that external efforts in this case are couched in terms of "partnership" and subordination to internal control. Instigated by three multilateral agencies — UNDP, the World Bank, and the ADB — the Governance Partnership has been established with the full co-operation of the Indonesian Government. Information materials state that "the Indonesian authorities are now much more receptive to the participation and support of the international community in their efforts to reform governance", and describe the Partnership as "an innovative co-operation arrangement among the Indonesian government, civil society organizations, the private sector, and Indonesia's international development partners".[25] Furthermore, it is formally recognized that "governance systems cannot be changed by practices imposed from outside", with much emphasis placed on the "national ownership" of governance reforms, said to be "the key to change".[26] Yet, whose agenda is actually driving the Governance Partnership? Are Partnership activities "always clearly grounded in respect of the sovereignty of the Indonesian side", as stated?[27] Or, alternatively, does the Partnership represent a new strategy by which international donors and lenders endeavour to implement their reform agenda by proxy, through the integration of selected national actors? In order to explore these questions, the following section examines the decision-making structures of the Partnership and the content of its activities.

Decision-making Structures

Governance Partnership information states unequivocally that, "To ensure a strong Indonesian commitment to, and ownership of, the Partnership process, it is led by a Governing Board consisting of key Indonesian actors in the reform process, as well as representatives of the international community."[28] The Governing Board is said to represent the "apex" of the Partnership, including the provision of "overall guidance and setting clear policy directions".[29] Yet, the Partnership has a relatively complex organizational structure, with at least three decision-making bodies: the Governing Board, an Executive Board, and a Policy Committee. The composition of these bodies and their respective functions are examined in turn.

Governing Board. The Governing Board is composed of both Indonesian and international members, though dominated by the former in the

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ratio of 2:1. The Indonesian members, twenty-two in total, are stated as drawn from the government, Parliament, the private sector, and civil society. Government and non-government members are roughly equal in number, though a closer analysis of Board membership reveals some surprising levels of representation, with relatively high government and private sector representation, while parliamentary and NGO representation is low.

There are two co-chairs of the Board, representing the government and non-government sides.[30] Two seats are reserved for members of the Indonesian Cabinet, currently held by the Minister of Finance and the Co-ordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs. Other government members on the current Board include the Chief Justice, a district Regent (that is, the elected district government leader), and high-ranking government officials — for instance, the Director-General for Foreign Economic Relations from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. State-related members include those from the relatively independent National Human Rights Commission, and National Law Commission. It is noteworthy that there is only one Member of Parliament (MP) on the Board, Professor J.E. Sahetapy, yet whose affiliation is given as the Chair of the National Law Commission and not as an MP. Although non-government representatives, including the private sector, currently constitute half of the Indonesian members, it would appear that there is only one single Board member unambiguously from the NGO sector, who is Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, chairperson of the Indonesian Women's Coalition.[31] This contrasts with a number of influential business leaders on the Board (currently four) — for instance, Heru Prasetyo, the Country Managing Partner of Accenture Indonesia, a well-known figure in the business community. Other non-government representatives include religious leaders from the Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant communities, with the latter two also representing the outlying provinces of West Timor and West Papua, while the rectors of two universities, including noted Muslim scholar Professor Nurcholish Madjid, represent the academic community. Membership is on an individual basis and not as organizational representatives, with Cabinet members as the only *ex-officio* Indonesian members.

There are a total of eleven international members on the Governing Board, representing the multilateral and bilateral agencies that provide finance to the Partnership. The three founding multilateral organizations — the UNDP, the World Bank and the ADB — have *ex-officio* seats. The remaining eight international members are currently representatives, at ambassadorial level, of bilateral donor countries.

The Governing Board meets quarterly and decision-making is generally by consensus. There is a provision for voting, with all Board

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members having a vote, including the international representatives, but it is stated that this has rarely been necessary.[32] Its role includes "establishing the policy framework" and "setting the agenda and workplan for the Partnership".[33]

Executive Board. Unusually, an Executive Board has also been established, which meets monthly. Its membership is a sub-set of the Governing Board, inclusive of all Indonesian members, except the Cabinet members, and excluding the international members. The Executive Board is responsible for "guid[ing] the strategic implementation of the workplans of the Partnership".[34] There appears to be a distinct overlap with the Governing Board, not only in personnel but also in function, and two points can be made. First, meeting more frequently, it appears that the Executive Board takes most key decisions, with the role of the Governing Board being to endorse such actions. Secondly, the exclusion of the international members appears to strengthen the idea of an Indonesian-led organization.

Policy Committee. Yet this latter point is contradicted somewhat by the composition and role of the Policy Committee. This six-member Committee, meeting weekly to date, is composed of representatives from the three multilateral agencies and from BAPPENAS, the National Development Planning Agency, plus two members from the Partnership's Executive Office, that is, the Executive Director (an Indonesian national) and the Senior Adviser. The Policy Committee's responsibilities are threefold: the day-to-day management of the Partnership, including financial resources; implementing decisions taken by the Governing and Executive Boards; and providing guidance to the Executive Office staff.[35] This Committee, meeting most frequently and on which international actors are clearly very influential, appears to have played the most significant role in the initial stages of the Partnership.[36]

Who Selects the Decision-makers? Thus, who controls the Partnership? From the organizational structure, there is certainly evidence to suggest that Indonesian actors play a significant role, particularly through the Executive Board. Nonetheless, the international agencies, especially the multilateral organizations, sustain their influence on day-to-day activities through the Policy Committee. Two further issues arise, however, as significant as the overall national–international composition of decision-making bodies. How are the Indonesian members of the Governing Board (and hence also the Executive Board) selected? How representative are these individuals of political reform groups within Indonesian society?

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First, as regards selection procedures, it appears there is no constitutional and rule-bound manner in which Board members are selected, other than by the sitting Board. This is somewhat surprising for an organization whose stated purpose is to promote democracy and good governance. Established in May 2000, the Governing Board was initially assembled by the three multilateral agencies through an *ad hoc* process of invitation to those individuals in Indonesian Government and society to whom they were relatively close, who in turn had some influence in suggesting others. Therefore, a Board of carefully selected and relatively close-knit individuals was created. When vacancies arise, prospective new members of the Board are proposed, discussed, and selected by existing Board members. There is no provision for nomination from outside, for example, at an annual general meeting where the Board, or a fraction of it, is re-selected by a wider constituency of those interested in political reform in Indonesia. By such means, therefore, a relatively closed group of fairly like-minded individuals has been created and maintained, unlikely to challenge or subvert an agenda of moderate and controlled reform. Such analysis questions the commitment by international actors to a "partnership" under national control, potentially asserting a reform agenda that does not conform to that of the international agencies.

Secondly, as regards the representativeness of the Governing Board, its composition has raised a number of concerns. One is its closeness to government. There is extensive high-level government representation on the Board, inclusive of Cabinet ministers and high-ranking officials. This would seem to limit the degree to which the Partnership can undertake a critical examination of government policies. Relatedly, there is a relative lack of civil society representation. Despite the obligatory inclusion of civil society strengthening as a priority of governance reform, few civil society organizations are actually represented on the Board, with the notable exclusion of the newer political advocacy NGOs that emerged in the transition period. Thus, the important advocacy role of civil society organizations, to exert pressure on the government to implement reforms, is notably lacking within the Partnership itself. Furthermore, this is contrasted with the relatively influential role of business leaders through significant private sector representation, which sits somewhat uneasily with the supposed focus of the Governance Partnership on political rather than economic reform. In contrast, there is no representation of trade unions, whose number and role in Indonesia have expanded in the post-transition period, and who are often associated with a positive role in democratization.[37] It would appear that the views of those excluded from power in Indonesia generally remain unheard in the Partnership.

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Activities

Turning to the Partnership's activities, these have been established through, first, agenda-setting and the identification of work priorities, and, secondly, by the implementation of a workplan for each priority theme through the two arms of the Partnership, the Facility for Policy Dialogue and Analysis and the Indonesian Governance Fund. These processes are examined in turn, with the notions of "partnership" and "Indonesian ownership" being unravelled further.

Agenda-setting. Although it is stated that the role of the Governing Board includes the responsibility for setting the Partnership's agenda, the work priorities were in fact largely *pre-determined* by the three multilateral agencies. A newsletter, published *prior* to the first meeting of the Governing Board on 12 May 2000, lists the six focus areas of the Partnership, with "lead responsibility" as follows:

- Legislative empowerment (UNDP)
- Electoral reform (UNDP)
- Civil society strengthening (UNDP)
- Judicial reform (World Bank)
- Civil service reform (World Bank)
- Corporate governance (ADB)

Decentralization was also noted as a multisectoral and cross-cutting issue.[38] Subsequently, the Governing Board added "anti-corruption" as a second cross-cutting priority,[39] while "police reform" has also been added as a seventh sectoral priority.

Establishment of the core priorities of the Partnership is clearly the key to determining the nature of the activities being pursued. It would appear that they were *not* determined through collective discussion and decision-making by the Governing Board, as officially presented. Instead, international influence is evident, notably that of the multilateral agencies and individual bilateral agencies. Initially, the role of the Governing Board has been, at best, to endorse a donor-driven agenda. Clearly, this undermines notions of Indonesian ownership and control.

The Facility and the Fund. Activity-wise, there are two core features of the Governance Partnership: a Facility for Policy Dialogue and Analysis (hereafter called "the Facility") and an Indonesian Governance Fund (hereafter referred to as "the Fund"). Both are funded through donor contributions, though separately.[40]

The Facility is dubbed a think-tank on governance issues, and aims at researching and formulating policies and strategies on governance

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reform issues in Indonesia. Its stated objective is to "encourage *national* dialogue on governance, informed by international experience".[41] In practice, the Facility budget pays for the Executive Office staff and the activities they initiate — for example, a corruption survey undertaken with the World Bank, and the establishment of a working group to explore issues of police reform. Within the Executive Office, small teams have developed strategy papers and workplans for 2002 for each priority area. The stated intention was to "work closely with the governance divisions of other international agencies, in particular the UNDP, World Bank and ADB",[42] with such close association clearly evident from the 2002 workplans. For instance, in the fields of legal/judicial reform and civil service reform, the Partnership contributes to the respective donor Working Groups, led by the World Bank in both instances, which aim "to formulate a joint donor framework and strategy" for each sector.[43] While the Partnership is also engaged in other activities directly with Indonesian organizations, such close interaction with international donor co-ordinating bodies limits notions of "national ownership" and heightens the degree of overall international influence on governance reform efforts in Indonesia.

Which of the numerous priority areas have been emphasized? Although still relatively early in the Partnership, four areas can be highlighted. In order of magnitude of estimated budgets for 2002, these are: anti-corruption, decentralization, legal and judicial reform, and police reform. Other sectors, namely, corporate governance, civil society strengthening, legislative empowerment, and electoral reform are receiving far less attention, with the budgets for the latter two areas particularly inconsequential.[44]

What explains this relative focus on some sectors and not others? Two reasons are suggested, one pertaining to a link with economic liberalization and the other concerning a lack of emphasis on mechanisms of democratic accountability. First, excepting decentralization, three of the four priority areas highlighted closely correspond with issues of economic liberalization and to the concerns of international financial institutions, notably, the World Bank and the ADB. Anti-corruption is a key area of World Bank activity world-wide, with corruption perceived as having an adverse impact on levels of investment and on economic growth more generally. Similarly, legal reform and the strengthening of the rule of law is emphasized by the Bank as necessary to guarantee business contracts and to safeguard foreign investment, with recourse available through the legal system as necessary. Clearly, the police is regarded as a key institution for ensuring law enforcement. Secondly, three of the four areas receiving *less* attention relate more to a democratization agenda, especially the various means

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of holding the executive to account — that is, through electoral systems, parliamentary bodies, and a strong civil society. Interestingly, the fourth area of *limited* emphasis is corporate governance. In contrast to the benefits for large companies, especially transnational corporations, from economic liberalization, corporate governance entails a degree of pressure on companies to conduct their activities in a more socially and environmentally responsible manner.

Operational since late June 2001, the Governance Fund is a grant-making body with the aim of "disburs[ing] funds directly to Indonesian agencies active in the national governance reform effort",[45] including both government bodies and civil society organizations. Two funding conditions are interesting to note, however. One is that international donors can *earmark* their contributions for specific purposes, provided that they are consistent with "the primary purpose of the Partnership",[46] with the Danish Government, for example, stipulating that their contribution be channelled to the legal and judicial sector.[47] In this way, donor agencies can retain a strong influence on how "their" money is to be used. The other condition, applicable to grant applicants, is that applications must be "in accordance with the priority areas".[48] A key criterion for project eligibility is "Appropriateness and Relevance to Priorities of the Partnership", with a preference stated for applications that "*closely correspond* to one or more of the core priorities of the Partnership".[49] While this may not seem unreasonable at first glance, what makes it problematic is the pre-determination of priority sectors by the international organizations. Therefore, project proposals on, for instance, issues of human rights abuses and impunity, or civil-military relations are ineligible for funding, despite being deemed important areas by many national actors, as discussed above. This restricted definition of what is fundable as democratic governance reform could lead to the politics of inclusion and exclusion, with a select group of civil society actors as favoured beneficiaries of the Governance Fund, while others advocating a more radical and independent pro-democracy agenda are denied assistance.[50]

In sum, as with agenda-setting, international influence is manifest in the activities of the Partnership. Regarding the Facility, there is very close interaction between Executive Office officials and those of international agencies in the development of Partnership-initiated activities and workplans. The focus on selected priority areas relates closely to the international agenda of economic liberalization. The degree of engagement with a wide range of informed, local experts is questionable, as is the extent to which controversial issues will be explored. Regarding the Fund, the programme areas reflect those priority sectors pre-determined by the international actors, limiting the

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distribution of funds by issue and, as seems likely, by type of local organization.

Critical Questions

Two sets of questions emerge from the preceding two sections. First, as regards the *content* of the Governance Partnership's reform programme, what differences can be perceived between the crucial challenges to democratization in Indonesia, identified in the first section of this article, and the reform measures currently promoted by the Partnership? How can divergent concerns be explained? Secondly, with regard to the *form* of the Partnership, can it really be described as such? Is it a genuine "partnership" between national and international actors, grounded in "national ownership" and sovereignty, as portrayed? Alternatively, if the agenda of the Governance Partnership remains externally-driven, what are the underlying motives of the international agencies? These questions are addressed in reverse order in the following two sections.

Questioning Partnership

The concept of partnership is an increasingly popular one in development parlance, especially with international donors and lenders sensitive to the criticism of policy imposition on developing countries. "Partnership" would seem particularly appropriate in the political domain, given the general consensus that democratization is essentially an endogenous process. Genuine partnership would entail co-operation between internal and external actors in pursuit of mutual goals, though ones established by national actors, given the sovereign right of a nation-state to determine its own policy options. The Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia certainly subscribes to such ideas, as discussed above. Nonetheless, the notion of "partnership" has been investigated here and generally found wanting, with limited Indonesian representation and control.

First, the representative nature of the Governing Board is restricted and problematic. The Governing Board may be described as composed of "key Indonesian stakeholders in the reform process",[51] but it is élite-based, representing limited interests within Indonesian society, close both to the government and to the international community of donors and lenders. A wider group of stakeholders involved in promoting democratic reforms is excluded, in effect, by undemocratic institutional mechanisms. Notably, the representatives from civil society are few in number, with an omission of newer political advocacy NGOs and trade unions, both of which have flourished since the end of authoritarianism

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and are significant pro-democracy actors. It has been remarked that the voices of those excluded from power generally remain unheard in the Partnership. The semblance of handing over decision-making power to Indonesian actors has been achieved, but in such a way that proxy control by international agencies is relatively guaranteed.

Secondly, as regards control, the decision-making powers of the majority Indonesian Board appear weak. The establishment of priorities was largely predetermined by the international agencies and not decided by the Governing Board. Therefore, to date at least, the Board has not had full control over the strategic direction of the Partnership, with its role more to endorse the agenda of the international agencies. Genuine partnership entails an equitable and meaningful relationship, characterized by depth and quality, and not one where money talks. Yet, the discussion above on the eligibility criteria for Governance Fund assistance provides evidence of the intent by the international actors to retain control over the financial resources, and the activities they support.

These two issues of representation and control are tightly interrelated, with the composition of the Governing Board being crucial if overall control is not to be *actually* relinquished by the international agencies, and only the *appearance* being given of doing so. Nonetheless, the emergence of the Indonesian-only Executive Board is an interesting development, with the potential for a greater degree of national control. The key outstanding issue, however, is whether membership is opened up to outside nomination, through the establishment of constitutional (and democratic) procedures.

Whose Agenda?

Turning to the content of Partnership activities, have the most significant issues pertaining to sustained democratic reform been addressed? For many Indonesians, democratization and good governance concern questions of popular control and of popular participation in the political system as a whole. Yet, the Partnership seems to avoid such issues and instead concentrates on more technical and even apolitical aspects of governance reform.[52] From the comparison between the key issues posited here in section one and the Partnership's agenda, it is clear that some crucial concerns are omitted from the latter, namely:

- civil–military relations and the role of the military in government, in business, and in society;
- past human rights abuses, including in East Timor, and issues of justice and reconciliation;
- political instability and civil conflict, including ethnic and religious conflict;[53]

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- constitutional reform, with the current 1945 Constitution restricting the growth of democracy.[54]

The absence of these key issues indicates clear differences in assessing the uppermost priorities with regard to democratization and good governance reform in Indonesia. For many Indonesians, especially those activists not included in the political élite, the role of the military in politics should be at the top of the agenda.[55] The first three issues outlined above are all interrelated, centred on the role of the military, past and present, with key implications for future democratization prospects. Firstly, military reform aimed at establishing civilian supremacy is a requisite of sustained progress towards democratization and good governance. The current fear expressed by the NGOs is that democratization in Indonesia is at a crucial stage, with concerns that the military has used the post-September 11 context to consolidate its power, and the potential for a regressive step towards renewed authoritarianism.[56] Secondly, the demands for investigations of past human rights abuses by the security forces (military and police), with cases brought before a human rights court, aim at consolidating the democratic transition through a clear statement that gross violations of the civil and political rights of the Indonesian people by those in power will not be tolerated. Thirdly, calls for a resolution of the ethnic-religious conflicts in Ambon and elsewhere, and of separatist insurrection in Aceh and West Papua, focus on the role of the military, seen as responsible at times for the continued violence. At present, any movement in these areas (reform of civil–military relations, investigation of human rights abuses, peaceful settlement of conflicts), appears to be in "slow motion", at best. There is a clear need for more rapid progress in these areas if relative political stability is to be restored, a necessary condition for any prospect of sustained democratization. Yet, these issues are not prioritized in the Partnership.

Although parliamentary reform has been accorded some priority in the Partnership, it is questionable whether "legislative empowerment" is the most appropriate focus in this instance. More pertinent are constitutional matters pertaining to the relationship between the legislature and the executive. As discussed above, a curious reversal has occurred in relations between the legislature and executive. In contrast to Parliament's role as a rubber-stamp during the Soeharto era, Parliament has become very powerful in overseeing the performance of the executive. The debates concerning the conflict between President Wahid and the House of Representatives (DPR), leading to the former's downfall, showed divergent interpretations of the Constitution, underlining the importance of a constitutional amendment to provide a clear understanding of the structural relationship between the executive

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and legislative bodies. In turn, major questions with regard to the specific nature of the democratic system to be established in Indonesia, currently neither a typical parliamentary nor presidential system, revolve around the settlement of this key issue.

More generally, there is an urgent need for major constitutional reform. Conceived as short-term, the 1945 Constitution remains current, yet restrictive of the growth of democracy in Indonesia. A broad spectrum of Indonesian NGOs argues strongly for the necessity of wide-ranging constitutional change in order to clearly outline democratic principles and procedures, including the protection of human rights. While not ignored by the Partnership, this crucial issue appears to receive only limited emphasis.

Why are these not priority issues on the agenda of the Governance Partnership? How can the divergences in priorities be explained? Three possible reasons are outlined here.

First, all are politically sensitive and challenging issues. It would appear that the international agencies want to remain close to government, reflected in the composition of the Governing Board. Whereas international institutions are often prepared to be demanding and insistent with regard to the economic reforms prescribed to national governments, they appear more reticent about venturing into contentious political territory, and hence the focus on the "low politics" of legal and civil service reform. An ambivalence is evident: the international agencies argue that good governance is imperative for sustainable development, yet shy away from more radical reform measures, despite the demands of significant sections of Indonesian society. Why is there this apparent reluctance to be more challenging to the government on political issues? Two reasons are suggested, related to donor economic and political interests. One is a fear of political instability resulting from more dramatic change, with harmful effects on international economic interests. If social unrest becomes uncontrollable, it will be hard to avoid capital flight (as in the case of the Jakarta riots of May 1998) and adverse impacts on foreign direct investment. Furthermore, a perception of the strategic role of the military in restoring stability in such circumstances may lead to a disinclination to question its dominant political position. Yet, it is argued here that political instability and social tension are heightened by a failure to address such key issues as civilian supremacy over the military, and allegations of human rights abuses. A second reason links democracy and governance promotion with donor political interests, especially those of the bilateral agencies, and their overriding concern to bolster relationships with liberal élites with whom a friendly and influential relationship can be established, partly through governance reform programmes.

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A second explanation concerns the tendency of Western governments and international organizations to export their own institutional models of democracy and democratization,[57] with limited consideration of the particular national context and the political realities faced in a specific country like Indonesia. It is our contention that external actors have failed to take the *legacies* of the Soeharto regime into sufficient account, especially the manner in which these continue to affect political life in Indonesia — for example, the influential role played by the military in politics, and the politicized nature of the legal system, especially the judiciary. Governance reform has largely been reduced to a technical exercise requiring the transfer of the requisite knowledge and financial resources in order to enhance the capacity of a particular political institution. Yet, this takes the politics out of political reform, tending to ignore underlying power relations, with little analysis of whose interests are served by the existing set-up, or whose interests would be threatened by reform efforts.[58] Such an orientation thus focuses on issues of "low politics" and not on the crucial questions relating to power relations and their transformation.

The final explanation explored here involves questioning whether the international agencies' self-declared goal of democratic reform is genuine. Is there a hidden agenda, with democratization and good governance perceived less as ends in themselves and more as means to economic objectives? It is proposed here that the international agencies, both multilateral and bilateral, have an instrumental attitude to democratization and good governance reform. Their fundamental concern is with sustained economic reform along neo-liberal lines, creating more open economies in the countries of East and Southeast Asia, accessible to international capital in its quest for investment and market opportunities, as well as the securing of resources. The economic crisis of 1997 facilitated economic restructuring along such lines, and the type of governance reforms identified here, as emphasized by the Partnership, are those that can serve economic purposes, for instance, legal reform, and anti-corruption activities. The dominant development paradigm that emerged in the 1990s, with the concept of good governance at its apex, focuses on the institutional framework required by a market economy, that is, the appropriate political, legal, financial and administrative institutions. Despite ostensibly being about democratic reform, it is posited here that the Governance Partnership is primarily oriented to the building and strengthening of such an institutional framework, one which offers an improved environment for international capital, including foreign direct investment, and provides safeguards for its profit-seeking activities.

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Conclusion: Partnership and Hyper-rationality

The analysis here is of the *myth* of "partnership" and "national ownership", and of the *reluctance* of international agencies to relinquish control of governance reform activities. This raises the question of why Indonesian actors are invited to participate at all, given the potential for some loss of control to the Indonesian-dominated Governing Board? In response, it is further suggested that the rhetoric of "partnership" and "ownership" is part of a strategic trend by international agencies by which their intervention in political and economic reforms in sovereign states is disguised and simultaneously accorded greater legitimacy. Related notions that serve similar functions are those of "participation" and "empowerment". This trend has been described by Guilhot as an exercise in "hyper-rationality", summed-up as follows:

> ... the instrumental rationality of [donors'] projects must disappear behind the impression that the processes they try to foster are endogenous and generated by domestic constituencies in the target country. Donors must avoid being perceived as exerting a direct control over the political or institutional outcomes that they are hoping to achieve. They must also avoid appearing as agenda-setters, and rather cultivate an image of 'facilitators' helping recipients to achieve their own goals.[59]

It is argued here that the Partnership for Governance Reform involves an endeavour of this nature, in which international agencies effectively pursue their own reform agenda, itself more closely related to economic liberalization than democratic political reform.

NOTES

1. Consultative Group meetings are the annual or bi-annual meetings, led by the World Bank, between all bilateral and multilateral agencies and the Indonesian Government, at which pledges of aid grants and loans are made in return for agreement on policy reforms.
2. Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia, "Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia" (mimeographed, November 2001).
3. M.H. Soesastro, "A Democratizing Indonesia: The Role of International Institutions and NGOs", *Indonesian Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2000): 258.
4. W. Liddle, "Indonesia in 2000: A Shaky Start for Democracy", *Asian Survey* 41, no. 1 (January/February 2001): 208–20; and B. Harymurti, "Challenges of Change in Indonesia", *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 4 (October 1999): 69–83.
5. H. Crouch, "Wiranto and Habibie: Military-civilian relations since May 1998", in *Reformasi, Crisis and Change in Indonesia*, edited by A. Budiman et al. (Melbourne: Monash Asia Institute, 1999), p. 27; A. Schwarz and J. Paris, "Introduction: The

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Politics of Post-Soeharto Indonesia", in *The Politics of Post-Soeharto Indonesia*, edited by A. Schwarz and J. Paris (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1999), p. 3.

6. Schwarz and Paris, op. cit.
7. Soesastro, op. cit., p. 256.
8. International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID), "INFID's Position Paper on CGI Meeting, November 2001" (mimeographed, November 2001).
9. See *Jakarta Post*, 23 February 2002.
10. P. Milne, "Indonesia struggles with its own war on terror", *Jakarta Post*, 23 February 2002.
11. Ibid.
12. The Constitution of 1945 was formulated by BPUPKI (a council for preparing the Independence of Indonesia) in 1945 in an urgent situation before the declaration of independence. There was another effort to write a new constitution by the so-called Badan Konstituante (Constitution Assembly) in 1956. However, after three years, this Assembly failed to agree on crucial issues, such as the foundation of the state (either Pancasila or Islam). In 1959, Soekarno issued a decree, disbanding the Assembly and restoring the UUD 1945 as the state constitution. In 1966, Soeharto stated his intent not to change the UUD 1945, and indeed it helped him to maintain his power and public support for three decades.
13. This view was the conclusion of Masyarakat Transparansi Indonesia (Indonesia Transparency Society/MTI) in 1999 after a thorough study on the Constitution. See *Kompas*, 7 October 1999.
14. The special working committee in charge of amending the constitution was set up within the MPR to prepare intensively the drafts of amendment. It consisted of fifty MPs representing all factions within the MPR. Drafts of the amendment were then delivered to the MPR's general and annual session for deliberation.
15. Articles agreed on include: the limitation of the President to two five-year terms in office (Article 7); some limitation of the powers of the President (Articles 13, 14, and 15); the election and composition of the House of Representatives (DPR), its functions and authority (Articles 19, 20, and 21); the election of provincial and district governments, and the relations between the central and local government (Article 18). However, debates within the MPR remain unresolved on many key issues, including: the form and the foundation of the state (Article 1); the composition of the MPR (Article 2) and the authority of the MPR (Article 3); direct or indirect mechanisms for presidential elections (Article 6A); the relations between the President and the DPR (Article 7C); the election, composition and powers of the House of Regional Representatives (DPD) (Article 22C and 22D); state financial matters, including the central bank (Articles 23, 23A, 23B, 23C, 23D); the State Audit Board (BPK) and its members and functions (Articles 23E, 23F, 23G); and the Supreme Court and law enforcement (Article 24, 24A, 24B, 24C).
16. T.M. Lubis, "Reformasi Constitusi", *TEMPO* 30, no. 10 (6 May 2001): 56. Translation of "Apabila Indonesia sungguh-sungguh ingin menegakkan demokrasi, supremasi hukum dan good governance, UUD 1945, the First Amendment dan the Second Amendment mutlak mesti diganti dengan konstitusi baru". Lubis emphasized that constitutional amendments would not cover all necessary aspects of reform, such as respect for human rights, wide participation of the public in governance, and the mechanisms of checks and balances between executive, legislative, and judicial bodies. A similar view was expressed by Soedjati Djiwandono, in his article entitled "Constitutional Change: A Must", *Jakarta Post*, 9 June 1999.
17. *Kompas*, 7 October 1999.

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18. NGOs such as Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia (Legal Aid / YLBHI); Lembaga Kajian dan Advokasi untuk Independensi Peradilan (Institute for Studies and Advocacy of Independent Justice/LeIP); and Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat (Institute for Studies and Advocacy of Society/Elsam).
19. Public scepticism has increased after members of the MPR initiated a movement to refuse further amendment of the Constitution, arguing that reform had gone too far and had deviated from the foundation of the state (*Pancasila*), collecting the signatures of some 200 MPs in support. This indicates that the ongoing process of constitutional reform was not seen as desirable by all members of the MPR.
20. Liddle, op. cit.
21. See Rainer Rohdewohld, *Jakarta Post*, 21 December 2000.
22. *Kompas*, 9 March 2000.
23. S. Tiwon, "From East Timor to Aceh: The Disintegration of Indonesia?", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 132, nos. 1 and 2 (2000): 97–104; and D. K. Emmerson, "Will Indonesia Survive?", *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 3 (May/June 2000): 95-106.
24. Harymurti, op. cit.
25. Partnership (2001).
26. Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia website <http://www.partnership.or.id/>, section on "Role and Functions", accessed on 18 March 2002.
27. Ibid.
28. Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia, "Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia: Workplan 2002" (mimeographed, 2002), Annex Two.
29. Partnership website, section on "Role and Functions".
30. The co-chairs are Gen. (ret.) Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the Co-ordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs, and Erna Witoelar, a nationally known NGO figure and member of several civil society organizations, including the Indonesian Forum for the Environment. Interestingly, as the Minister of Settlement and Regional Development in the government of former President Wahid, Erna Witoelar was initially the government co-chair but has since swapped hats.
31. The other two non-church members with current non-government affiliations are an ex-minister (Erna Witoelar) and a former MPR member (Naimah Hasan).
32. Interview with Partnership official, Jakarta, 21 February 2002.
33. Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia, *Newsletter* III, 26 May 2000, p. 1. Available at <http://www.undp.or.id/governance/partnership.html>, accessed on 18 March 2002.
34. Partnership (2002), Annex Two.
35. Partnership (2001).
36. Recent "revised terms of reference" for the Policy Committee do transfer some responsibilities to the Executive Office itself — for example, the approval of small projects (under US$75,000) (Partnership 2002, Annex Two). One consequence is a planned decrease in the frequency of Policy Committee meetings to monthly (ibid.).
37. E.O. Akwetey, *Trade Unions and Democratization: A Comparative Study of Zambia and Ghana*, Stockholm Studies in Politics No. 50 (Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1994).
38. Partnership *Newsletter* II, 10 May 2000, p. 5. One subsequent shift has been to replace the notion of "lead agencies" with that of "focal points", for instance, the World Bank for civil service reform. Perhaps this is because multilateral leadership obviously contradicts the idea of national ownership. Whether the substance of who actually controls the agenda in different sectors has changed is a separate question, however.
39. Partnership *Newsletter* IV, 12 June 2000, p. 1.

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40. As of end-2001, the Facility had contributions of more than US$3.6 million, while the Fund had received over US$14.6 million, out of total commitments to the Fund of almost US$26 million. The main Facility contributors are the UK, the Netherlands and the UNDP, with a smaller sum from Denmark, and a commitment (not disbursed to date) from the World Bank. Fund contributors are from a wider range of bilateral donors, though notably the Netherlands has provided a substantial US$10 million of the US$14.6 million received to date.
41. Interview with World Bank official, Jakarta, 5 September 2000
42. Partnership (2001).
43. Partnership (2002), Section B, Priority Area Workplans. Further examples of close involvement with donor agencies include the following: to "contribute to various World Bank initiatives in the field of corporate governance"; to plan an "alignment (complementary involvement) of the Partnership with donor activities" in decentralization; and to continue facilitation of the donor Working Group on police reform.
44. Partnership (2002), Section B.
45. Partnership (2001).
46. Ibid.
47. Interview with Partnership official, Jakarta, 21 February 2002.
48. Partnership (2001).
49. Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia, "Guidelines for Applicants" (mimeographed, undated), p. 3 (emphasis added).
50. Focusing on democracy assistance in the Middle East, Brouwer has noted a similar process in which many pro-democratic organizations do *not* become recipients, which "tell us about democracy assistance as much as organizations that do receive support" (2000, p. 10). His categories of non-recipients include "denied recipients", where organizations are not considered suitable to receive democracy assistance, at times for political and ideological reasons, or "self-excluded" organizations that oppose democracy assistance as "foreign manipulation of domestic politics" (ibid.).
51. Partnership (2002), Annex Two.
52. Perhaps revealingly, a member of the Executive Office stated that it was "important to remain apolitical" (interview with Partnership official, Jakarta, 21 February 2002). Although this could be interpreted as remaining non-party political, it is consistent with the view of promoting governance as a technical exercise.
53. Conflict management has been added as a "cross-cutting issue", together with participation, poverty, gender, the environment, information, and transparency (Partnership, November 2001). However, as with these other generic issues, there is no indication of specific activities in the conflict management area within the Workplan for 2002 (Partnership 2002).
54. A caveat is also necessary here. Although not a priority sector, references to constitutional reform are made under the heading of legal/judicial reform (Partnership 2002, Section B, Priority Area Workplans). However, the fact that the major issue of constitutional reform is merely a sub-area indicates a lack of emphasis, especially given that police reform is a sectoral priority in its own right.
55. For example, interviews with representatives of Kontras (8 September 2000), and INFID (20 February 2002).
56. Interview with representatives of INFID (20 February 2002).
57. T. Carothers, "Democracy Assistance: The Question of Strategy", *Democratization* 4, no. 3 (1997): 109–32.
58. Ibid., pp. 122–23.

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59. N. Guilhot, *Democracy Promotion Agents in Perspective*, Discussion Paper No. 2/2000 (Florence: European University Institute, 2000), pp. 23–24.

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Towards a Human Rights Regime in Southeast Asia: Charting the Course of State Commitment

MAZNAH MOHAMAD

The contestation for a regional or national human rights regime involves nation-states battling against their domestic civil society and an international movement for a normative global order. This article draws out this dynamic by charting the course of state commitment to the issue. The initial discussion is on the prospect of a regional body such as ASEAN playing a more committed role in establishing this human rights regime. Has ASEAN, with its avowed stance on non-interference, responded favourably to the human rights challenge? The second discussion focuses on the four government-established national human rights institutions that exist in ASEAN. The article questions whether a human rights regime conflicts with the notion of a nation-state as envisioned by Southeast Asian governments.

Introduction

Today, in Southeast Asia, redress of human rights violations may be far from being realized. However, following the Asian financial crisis in 1997 there has been modest progress in terms of the proliferation of discourse on human rights and democracy throughout the region.[1] More arguments have also been propounded to tailor human rights language, culture, and its implementation to local contexts and sensitivities.[2] But Southeast Asian governments have continued to regard human rights as an ambivalent subject in national development.[3] At the same time, they have been forced to engage with the issue, for a variety of reasons — from paying lip-service to an increasingly assertive public

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demand for accountability to using it as a means for shoring-up political credibility in a climate of regional economic uncertainty, to building up an image more acceptable to prevailing international norms. While the debate on whether human rights is a universal or relativistic norm rages on, different elements are shaping a new climate for human rights understanding and advocacy. For example, the imminent manifestation of an International Security Order in the wake of the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001 will leave both critics and defenders of universal human rights groping for renewed answers to an old issue. The pervasiveness of the discourse on security over respect for human freedom has now become one of the stumbling blocks against progress in human rights, replacing the previous divisiveness stemming from the "universalist versus relativist" debates, with authoritarian states promoting the position of the latter.[4] Post-September 11 has turned out to be an opportunity for the nation-state to exert its sovereignty even more forcefully and to sideline the agendas of the global normative movement, one of which being human rights, to a token concern.

The purpose of this article is to look at the dynamics of the human rights question by examining the role played by the state in furthering the human rights agenda within Southeast Asia. The article is divided into two areas of discussion. The first is on the prospect of a regional body such as ASEAN playing a more committed role in establishing a human rights regime. The assessment of this issue revolves round whether the regional organization, with its avowed stance on non-interference, has responded favourably and accordingly to the human rights challenge. The second area of discussion is on the four government-established national human rights institutions currently existing in ASEAN.[5] Are these nationally established human rights commissions significantly different from one another, and what have been their successes and failures? It is the contention of this article that a human rights regime is difficult to foster in the region because its very existence will be seen to undermine the concept of the strong, autonomous, and economically-sound nation-state that Southeast Asian governments have traditionally promoted. By assessing the functions and performance of Southeast Asian national human rights commissions, the article provides evidence of a strong state-centric resistance against the setting up of an effective human rights regime. In fact, the contestation for a human rights regime has always involved nation-states battling against their domestic civil society and an international movement pushing for a normative global order. The discussion will attempt to draw out this particular dynamic and concludes with some reflections on the future of human rights advocacy in Southeast Asia.

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The Prospect for Human Rights within the ASEAN Rubric

ASEAN's early successes were largely related to its role as a regional mechanism operating within the context of Cold War politics. Despite the potentially destabilizing impact of the war in Vietnam, the founding member-countries of ASEAN successfully remained as peaceful and independent entities. The original ASEAN countries were models of a functioning free market economy. Impressive economic development in Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia for much of the 1980s and 1990s was a successful version of industrialization for developing countries.

It was at the end of the Cold War that the ineffectualness of ASEAN began to be highlighted.[6] Post-1990 economic globalization made way for the deregulation of financial regimes and provided for more liberal capital movements. Given the rapid rate of economic development, there was extensive labour migration within ASEAN itself. Yet, labour rights policies for a cross-migrating work-force were either avoided or left undeveloped. Another issue which had become perilous to handle because of the ASEAN tenet of non-intervention was the issue of insurgency or secessionism wrought by ethno-nationalists. Some ASEAN countries have been known to have tacitly harboured or supported insurgent or secessionist movements of neighbouring countries, although this has not been brought up openly on an official agenda within the regional body.[7] Terrorism, which is allegedly waged by a cross-network of Islamic militant groups in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, is a particularly sensitive issue in which solutions will not be sought easily through multilateral arrangements within ASEAN.

Obviously, an issue that is certain to jolt if not undermine the ASEAN principle of "non-intervention" and protection of national sovereignty is human rights itself. By virtue of the fact that human rights violations come within international law (through the International Bill of Human Rights and accompanying instruments), their redress would inevitably involve the questioning, if not the transgression, of national jurisdictions. Another aspect of human rights compliance is the pressure for national governments who are signatories of the United Nations' Human Rights Conventions to enact or amend enabling domestic laws to reflect and promote tenets of the international instruments. No ASEAN country has ratified all twenty-six international instruments of human rights, while only two ASEAN countries (Cambodia and the Philippines) have ratified all six major human rights conventions (see Table 1). Only the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has been ratified by all ten ASEAN countries. The most "avoided" international bill of human rights is the Convention Against Torture (CAT) to which only three ASEAN countries are signatories.

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The picture sketched above reflects continuing ASEAN reservations about accepting intervention to uphold the notion of "universality" in the recognition and definition of human rights norms and principles as formally adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) has now been treated as a document open to reassessment and revision.

Questions, doubts, and contentions about the universality of human rights were first raised during the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. The purpose of this meeting was to call for a re-strengthened endorsement of the 1948 Declaration. While the ASEAN countries did not withhold their reaffirmation of support for the 1948 Declaration, extensive debate and discourse about the hitherto assumed universalization of the human rights regime was sparked off.[8] Countries expressing their new-found reservations on the 1948 Declaration were largely East Asian, Islamic, and Third World countries.[9] ASEAN heads of state met in Bangkok prior to the Vienna meeting to draw up the basis of their reservations and doubts on the universality of human rights norms and standards. While the group reiterated its endorsement of the 1948 Charter, many members were not prepared to ratify the various international human rights treaties and conventions. In the Bangkok meeting, ASEAN adopted instead the Asia-Pacific Declaration on Human Rights (or The Bangkok Governmental Human Rights Declaration, 1993). The ASEAN governments were specifically uncomfortable with the universalists' over-emphasis on civil and political rights at the expense of rights to development and basic needs. The meeting tried to offer a concept of a "Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities" as an alternative to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[10] Amidst these criticisms, there was an unavoidable realization that Southeast Asia was one of the few regions in the world that did not have its own regional human rights mechanism.

Why were the ASEAN governments more forceful with their dissent against human rights in the 1990s, even though many had been the original endorsers of the UDHR in 1948? The ASEAN governments' assertiveness was said to be directly linked to East Asia's newfound prosperity as an emerging economic entity.[11] At this time, the notion of an "Asian values" school was being propounded to distance Asian cultural and political systems from those of the West. Many saw this posturing as a justification by the Asian ruling élites to retain their anti-democratic and authoritarian styles of governance. This was not unrelated to the imperative of the Asian developmental state, which seeks to sustain its market-competitive edge in the global economy by restricting, for example, civil liberties in the form of labour rights.[12] Another emerging idea was the suggestion that a Japan-led Asia was

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TABLE 1
Major Human Rights Conventions and Covenants Ratified by the ASEAN Countries (2001)

Six Major Conventions and Covenants	*Brunei Darussalam*	*Cambodia*	*Indonesia*	*Laos*	*Malaysia*	*Myanmar*	*Philippines*	*Singapore*	*Thailand*	*Vietnam*
ICERD (International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) 1965		☐	☐	☐			☐			☐
ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) *1966*		☐					☐		☐	☐
ICESCR (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) *1966*		☐					☐		☐	☐
CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) *1979*		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CAT (Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment) *1984*		☐	☐				☐			
CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) *1989*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other Conventions										
Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining 1948 *Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention (87)*		☐	☐			☐	☐			
Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining 1949 *Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention (98)*		☐	☐		☐		☐	☐		

TABLE 1 — cont'd

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TABLE 1 – cont'd

Other Conventions	Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Indonesia	Laos	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam
Elimination of Forced and Compulsory Labour 1930 *Forced Labour Convention (29)*		□	□	□	□	□		□	□	
Elimination of Forced and Compulsory Labour 1957 *Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (105)*		□	□		X		□	X	□	
Elimination of Discrimination in Employment and Occupation 1951 *Equal Remuneration Convention (100)*		□	□		□		□		□	□
Elimination of Discrimination in Employment and Occupation 1958 *Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (111)*		□	□				□			□
Abolition of Child Labour 1973 *Minimum Age Convention (138)*		□	□		□		□			
Abolition of Child Labour 1999 *Worst forms of Child Labour Convention (182)*			□							

□ = Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature
X = Ratification denounced
Source: United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 44–55.

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poised to become an influential economic power, enabling it to establish an alternative international order. The coming of the "Pacific Century" to replace the "Atlantic Century" became a much-touted belief.[13]

The ensuing philosophical, political, and polemical debates centring around the notion of "Asian values" has been made possible by an emergent unipolar world at the end of the Cold War.[14] In the early 1990s, vocal East Asian leaders expressed their disquiet about an emerging neo-imperialism wrought by former colonialists. However, the end of the Cold War spelled none of the historical necessity to align with one dominant superpower over the other. The notion of the coming Pacific Century as a challenge to *Pax Americana* was an attractive idea which Asian leaders were keen to promote in order to bolster their political legitimacy at the domestic level. One other feature marking this period was the demise of credible political opposition throughout many Southeast Asian states, especially in places where the leadership was most vociferous in asserting the "Asian values" position. Singapore and Malaysia were not only riding high on an economic upturn, but their governments' political legitimacy was also at its most assured. It was this experience of simultaneous economic growth with unassailable political strength which lent a "historic circumstance" to justify an Asian route to development.[15]

The Bangkok "Governmental" Human Rights Declaration of 1993 explicitly stated the concerns of ASEAN in viewing human rights as a tool of Western neo-imperialist agenda.[16] Hence, the ASEAN states were keen to promote the idea that only a regional rather than a global arrangement should best promote and protect human rights in specific regions.

Civil Society Push for an ASEAN Mechanism on Human Rights

As a result of the expanding discourse on human rights emanating from both governmental and non-governmental quarters, some tangible advancement in the establishment of a human rights mechanism was achieved. Having put forward a challenge to the need for a more particularistic set-up, ASEAN foreign ministers in their joint communiqué at the twenty-sixth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held in Singapore in 1993, as well as ASEAN parliamentarians in the Kuala Lumpur AIPO Declaration on Human Rights, declared the organization's willingness to establish a regional human rights mechanism.[17]

In 1995, the Human Rights Committee of the Law Association of Asia (LAWASIA) initiated the process by organizing a series of meetings involving representatives from existing national human rights institutions, parliamentary human rights committees, and human rights

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non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the region to discuss the possibility of setting up an institutional arrangement to fulfil ASEAN's human rights promise. Arising from these meetings, the Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism was formed in 1996, with its secretariat based in the Human Rights Centre of the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines.[18] The ultimate purpose of this Working Group is to push ASEAN towards the setting up of the ASEAN Human Rights Commission.

Many advocates of the above view the ASEAN policy of non-interference and non-intervention as having been upheld "for too long", with governments still harbouring fear of foreign intervention in their internal affairs.[19] Hence, the challenge for the Working Group was to define what exactly a regional mechanism would entail. The options proposed ranged from having an ASEAN human rights charter and a regional human rights court to simple co-operation between national human rights organizations.[20] Unlike the position taken by the ASEAN governments, the Working Group stressed that the agreement would be in consonance with the principles of the universality of human rights, and that regional and national laws be consistent with international human rights law. However, the reach of the commission would be limited as only countries ratifying the agreement would be subjected to the mandate of the commission. If nothing else, this Working Group would remain as the human rights "conscience" of ASEAN.

National Human Rights Commissions in ASEAN

In addition to a regional mechanism, the formation of national human rights institutions is considered even more urgent in the overall effort of building a Southeast Asian human rights regime. Currently, in ASEAN, four of its member countries have established their own National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The NHRC is an institution established by the national government, and its formation is largely induced by an international human rights regime which maintains that the enforcement of human rights standards must effectively and ultimately be the responsibility of national states. National human rights commissions are crucial in the present climate of doubt and debate over human rights, as it is believed that "the lofty ideals contained in the international human rights instruments will remain irrelevant to individuals unless they are actualised in the national context".[21]

The comprehensive principles used to guide and establish the criteria for the formation and functioning of national human rights institutions are known as the "Paris Principles". Elements of the Paris Principles include having a comprehensive mandate to deal with any

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violation of human rights (including those specified in international conventions not ratified by national governments), having a membership composition that is independent and drawn from a wide spectrum of civil society, and ensuring that national commissions function independently of the government.[22]

In many situations, the existence of the National Human Rights Commission has led to an "unhappy marriage" between the institution and its national government. The national human rights commissions in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand were each established at different times, and under different sets of institutional, political, historical, and cultural circumstances. In institutional terms, the national commissions have very similar goals and functions. However, there are some key differences worth noting, namely: (1) the legal locus of founding instruments, (2) social and political conditions affecting their establishment, (3) their mediation role, and (4) the provision for selection of commission members.

The first difference is in the legal instruments governing the establishment and empowerment of these national commissions. In the Philippines and Thailand, governments were required by popular will enshrined in the constitution to set them up and pass all the necessary enabling legislation. In Thailand, Sections 199 and 200 in the 1997 Constitution enshrine and detail the duties of a national human rights commission.[23] In the Philippines, Article XII, Sections 17–19 of the 1987 Constitution delineate the composition, functions, and duties of the Filipino Commission on Human Rights (CHR). In comparison, Indonesia's and Malaysia's national commissions stem from presidential decrees, parliamentary decrees, or organic laws, initially promulgated in 1993 and 1999 respectively.

As for the second difference, the four national commissions were each set up under different conditions. The first commission to be established was in the Philippines, which came with the downfall of Ferdinand Marcos and his rule by martial law in 1986. Following Marcos' ouster, a Presidential Committee on Human Rights (PCHR) was set up to investigate and recommend remedies to address human rights violations under the Marcos regime.[24] In 1987, a new "people's constitution" was promulgated, in which a Commission on Human Rights was entrenched. Thus, the commission was established in the midst of a massive wave of political liberalization, where the goals of government were being redefined, and the emphasis was on people's rights, democracy, openness, the rule of law, and transparency.

After the Philippines, Indonesia was the second ASEAN country to set up a national human rights commission, although in radically

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different circumstances. When the commission was established in 1993 by presidential decree, Indonesia was then still in the grip of Soeharto's rule, with no concomitant flowering of political and civil liberties. Rather, the commission was the result of increased responsiveness to human rights concerns during Soeharto's "New Order" government of the early 1990s. Indeed, Indonesia's foreign minister played a prominent role in convincing Soeharto to set up a commission. According to one Komnas HAM Commissioner, the years of authoritarian centralized rule were actually "golden years" for the effectiveness of the commission, as it benefited from extensive co-operation of state agencies — including the military and police — which were all directly answerable to the President.[25] However, the good times ended abruptly in 1996 when the commission's activities in investigating an attack on the offices of the PDI-P opposition party directly threatened Soeharto's political interests. State co-operation ceased, showing the limitations of dependence on powerful political patrons as opposed to rules-based institutional guarantees for human rights.

Thailand was next in establishing the foundations for its own national commission, when the Asian financial crisis in 1997 accelerated a pre-existing movement for political reform, leading to the passing of the long-debated "people's constitution" in October that year.[26] Part of this new emphasis was the entrenchment of a broad, liberal panoply of human rights in the constitution, as well as a mandate to establish a national commission to protect and promote those rights. However, from that date, it took nearly four years for the commission to be finally operational, as a result of the slow nomination procedure, and political squabbling over candidates' qualifications.[27]

Malaysia followed closely behind Thailand in establishing its National Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM) in 1999, also partly in response to a changed political climate in the country.[28] At the time of SUHAKAM's formation, international pressure was being exerted on Malaysia over the highly-publicized case of the ouster of Anwar Ibrahim from the government, and his subsequent imprisonment. Musa Hitam, a former Chairperson of the 52nd United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1995 and 1998 may have also used his personal clout to persuade the Prime Minister to agree to the establishment of SUHAKAM, of which he was to become its first chairman. Growing international awareness and condemnation of the sacking as Deputy Prime Minister of Anwar and his subsequent trial bore its weight on the government to salvage its reputation by relenting to a human rights instrument.

The third area of difference is in the role of mediation in which the national commissions actively participate. The national commissions

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in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines all have explicit provisions calling for a role in mediation between parties. However, the Malaysian commission has no such role, only an exclusively advisory one. Malaysia's commission is highly government-centred and formalistic in its inception. Its annual report does not explicitly mention a role for civil society organizations in ameliorating the human rights situation in Malaysia. In comparison, the formal functions of the Indonesian, Thai, and Philippine commissions actually require them to forge or promote co-operation with civil society nationally, and even internationally. In Indonesia's case, the country's reliance on the international community in its reform efforts is even recognized.[29] The Philippine Commission on Human Rights goes the farthest towards addressing the imbalance between state power and resources and the capacity of individuals to achieve those rights. The commission even provides in "Assisting victims of human rights violation and/or their families with other forms of services, including legal aid and financial assistance."[30]

The fourth difference to be emphasized is in the provision for the selection of members of the commissions. In Indonesia, the national commission has been mandated to have up to thirty-five members. The commission itself nominates two individuals for every position available; they are then elected by the Legislative Assembly and appointed by the President. Nominees must have experience in human rights work, and have either professional legal experience, government experience, or be prominent figures in civil society. Two five-year terms may be served.[31] In practice, this process has received many complaints relating to its transparency and the qualifications and credibility of those nominated. In addition, the secretary-general must be a civil servant, which would somewhat compromise the commission's independence by having its top officer holding a rank in a hierarchical, government-controlled bureaucratic organization.[32]

Thailand's nomination system, on the other hand, has been praised for being "highly democratic", and it has been noted that it "should produce well-qualified, independent-minded commissioners".[33] A selection committee, comprising the Chief Justices of the Supreme Court and Supreme Administrative Court, the Attorney-General, the Chairperson of the Law Society, five academics, ten NGO representatives, five political party representatives, three people from the media, in addition to the Secretary-General of the Commission, must submit a list of candidates to the Senate for selection by vote, with final formal appointment being made by the King. In effect, this is very similar to the Indonesian system, and in practice has proven to be an agonizingly

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slow process, given the length of time needed to set up the commission. Furthermore, the nominees must have experience in the field of human rights protection, and cannot concurrently hold any political (party) or government positions or affiliations (they must be full-time commissioners, in comparison to those of Indonesia who are basically unpaid volunteers, which compromises somewhat on their ability to perform their duties efficiently and fairly). They also cannot have any criminal convictions and can serve for only one six-year term. However, the independence of the commission is somewhat compromised in that its secretariat is classified as a ranking office in the bureaucracy, making its officials subject to possible political interference through the hiring process. Indeed, the political system can hold up appointments and manipulate their funding.[34]

The nomination system in Malaysia is the most questionable, as commissioners are appointed on the recommendation of the Prime Minister for short, but renewable, two-year terms. This highly centralized, top-down nomination process curtails the independence of the commissioners, as they are under constant threat of removal if their performance is unsatisfactory to the powers who appoint them. The fact that the head of government should appoint the members of any watchdog commission is a clear case of conflict of interest, open to political pressure and compulsion. This undermines the credibility of the institution when it comes to reporting on the government's performance, especially when it involves imputing their agents as the perpetrators of human rights violations. While the commission is officially responsible to Parliament, and legally bound to submit its report to the Speaker, the Commission nonetheless gives the Prime Minister an advance preview of the report "out of respect" for his position before releasing it to the Speaker and the public.[35] This tends to exemplify the strong pull on the commission's activities by the executive power. The latest appointment of new commissioners has been heavily condemned by non-governmental human rights bodies.[36]

In the Philippines, members of the commission are appointed by the President, and their budgets come from public coffers controlled by politicians.[37] No criteria are given in the constitution on how commissioners are to be selected, although it is determined elsewhere that a majority (from a total of five commissioners) must be members of the bar, all must be thirty-five years or older, and should have ten years of experience in human rights work.[38] The low number of commissioners in the Philippines is indicative of the general lack of resources available in that country, and symbolizes a chronic problem the CHR has in its operational capacity.

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National Commissions in Practice

The actual practices of the various national commissions can give further insights into the state of human rights in the various countries. The performance of national human rights institutions is a key indicator in this regard.

The Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR)

In the Philippines, as is to be expected from its longer history, the Commission on Human Rights has become deeply embedded in both the operation of government and society, having developed far-reaching networks through years of active co-ordination and co-operation on different projects. In addition to extensive co-operation and co-ordination with civil society and the government, the CHR has also established a wide-ranging regional network of subsidiary organizations, including regional offices, and a system of local *barangay* Human Rights Action Centres to extend its presence down to every village. However, this ambitious plan is plagued by a lack of resources, as there is no budget to support the centres, and the CHR is either unable or unwilling to supervise these bodies effectively.[39] Out of 40,000 villages, only 14,000 have so far established these Human Rights Action Centres.

Despite the Philippines' lead on the holistic approach to human rights, serious obstacles remain above and beyond the lack of resources. As a function of a highly diversified and liberalized society, Philippine civil society is also highly heterogenized, which entails significant difficulties in co-ordinating action and seeking co-operation from NGOs. Indeed, there is a major ideological split in civil society between the so-called "rejectionists" and the "re-affirmationists", who disagree on whether to work with the government, or to support insurgency to unseat the government.[40] This can be seen most explicitly in the Mindanao conflict, and the waffling of various factions of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) between co-operation and rebellion. The same also applies to the remaining supporters of the Communist New People's Army (NPA).[41]

Indonesia's Komnas HAM

One of the biggest reasons for the early successes of Indonesia's Komnas HAM was, ironically, Soeharto's strong centralized control and his endorsement of the institution. This had allowed for the smooth co-ordination among government agencies to the advantage of Komnas HAM. However, the range of investigations which the commission could undertake was circumscribed by that same power. Now the situation is completely reversed, as political liberalization has greatly

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expanded the range of options open, while the fragmentation of power, lack of co-ordination, and institutional decay (corruption) has constrained the effectiveness of all government institutions, including Komnas HAM. While some civil and political rights have improved for many, some of the most basic rights — to life, freedom from fear, to a home — are more tenuous than ever before for countless others. Indeed, calls have been made by a coalition of prominent NGOs for the entire Komnas HAM commission to resign *en masse* for their failure to deal with some of the worst excesses of the Soeharto era and the transitional period after he stepped down. Charging that "it's the Commission itself which has become its [own] obstacles [*sic*]", members of the coalition accused it of shielding prominent personalities suspected of human rights violations.[42]

The problem of political will is particularly serious when it comes to investigating human rights abuses committed by the military in Indonesia, characterized as "anarchy corruption" by NGOs.[43] The major shift in power from the President to the Legislative Assembly leaves Indonesia without a political centre, and a unifying direction. The practical results are devastating for victims of past human rights violations, as the lack of political direction leads to a breakdown of the entire system, as surviving élites from the New Order regime use their significant influence to block any initiatives to incriminate them.[44]

The limited prosecution of past human rights violations remains one of the biggest failures of the post-Soeharto era. President Megawati's own commitment to human rights remains uncertain. Although Megawati has endorsed the need to settle gross violations of human rights in regions of armed conflict and has allowed the prosecution of offences in East Timor, she is personally close to a number of prominent military figures. Thus far, only nineteen of thirty-three East Timor rights violators identified by Komnas HAM have been accepted by the Attorney-General's office as "candidate suspects".[45] Furthermore, despite the setting up of the Human Rights Court in January 2002 to try at least eighteen senior army officers and militiamen, there has been criticism of the decision by the Attorney-General's office not to prosecute the then defence minister and armed forces chief General Wiranto, alleged by human rights groups to be morally responsible for the violence in East Timor.[46]

Malaysia's SUHAKAM

Malaysia's situation is again different from that of the Philippines or Indonesia. One might expect that the National Human Rights Commission, SUHAKAM, could also benefit from the efficiencies of authoritarian rule as Komnas HAM had done in Indonesia in the mid-1990s. However, SUHAKAM was created at a time of political ferment

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in Malaysia, when the government was actively repressing the political opposition while putting Anwar Ibrahim on trial. In this context, it was difficult for the commission to ignore all the government's controversial actions, and thus found itself quite vocally criticizing the government.

Despite initial fears that SUHAKAM would be nothing more than window dressing to restore the credibility of the government while it dealt with Anwar, some NGO activists have acknowledged that the Commission has done a commendable job, given the difficult circumstances.[47] However, the very issue of Anwar's trial, and the detention of other dissidents, highlights an important point in the Commission's powers — it cannot address or investigate any issue which is, or has been before the courts. Thus, Anwar's case, and the government's alleged abuse of his rights and those of many of his supporters could not then be taken up by the Commission as a case of human rights violation. In that respect, it should be noted that the Commission is established on the basis and authority of a parliamentary law, which cannot override other laws as specified in the Malaysian Constitution. In short, the powers of the Commission are circumscribed as it is prevented from going against the tenets of previously enacted laws, such as the Internal Security Act (ISA), which provides for detention without trial.

Despite these limitations, the Commission has had some modest success in putting out frank reports critical of the government's use of the ISA, limitations on freedom of speech, and most recently, freedom of assembly. SUHAKAM's recommendations, following its first open inquiry into allegations of police brutality in a massive protest rally, on 5 November 2001, along the Kesas highway, have been welcomed by the public. However, this was met with government condemnation of the report as being influenced by "Western thinking" and not in the interest of the nation.[48] However, one of the commissioners reported that such an action had helped to change the attitudes of law enforcers, as some policemen are now conscious of SUHAKAM's possible rebuke, if complaints from the public, no matter how trivial, are not recorded down.[49] However, the fallout of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States has seen the Commission retreating from its own purpose. Soon after 11 September, the chairman of the Commission, Musa Hitam, said that in the light of the fight against terrorism, "human rights must take a backseat".[50]

Thailand's National Human Rights Commission

Thailand's National Commission was slow in getting started, taking nearly four years from the 1997 constitutional mandate to the opening of its offices in 2001. This was due to the debate over the enabling

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laws necessary to establish the Commission. Academics, business people, and civil society activists aligned against conservative politicians and bureaucrats over the exact character of the body. The independence of the Commission became a central issue, as conservatives sought to make it an easily controlled, minor bureaucratic office, in contrast to the activists' vision of an independent, vocal, and effective body. Using the media as their platform and threatening to blacklist politicians supporting conservative proposals in an upcoming election, the activists were successful in forcing a compromise. An acceptable enabling bill was finally passed, with the Commission coming under the Senate for its first five years, and then having the option to become independent.[51]

The complex procedure used for selecting National Commissioners, who seek to build a broad-based social consensus involving all sectors of society directly concerned with the promotion and protection of human rights, has also slowed the starting date of the Commission. Since it only recently opened its doors, just a few comments are appropriate. One issue likely to emerge is the definition of human rights which the Commission will use as its standard. Commissioner Saneh Chamarik has advocated a local definition of rights, with a strong emphasis on the protection of the traditional "way of life" as communities seek to regain some degree of autonomy after decades of rigid centralization. Others have argued for the use of international standards, which, in turn, have been criticized by nationalists resentful of foreign domination.[52]

In Thailand, the Office of the National Commission and its staff are considered "an agency of the National Assembly", leaving control over hiring and funding in the hands of professional politicians, many of whom still operate according to more traditional clientelist patterns.[53] Within the context of Thailand's rapidly changing political landscape, it remains to be seen what impact such constraints will have. As political parties merge and the power of party leaders grows, there have been many concerns about how such a powerful political force can dominate the system and society. This is seen in recurring concerns over the current government's stifling of the media and other critical voices in society, as well as corrupting such institutions as the Supreme Court through the inappropriate exercise of political power.[54]

Conclusion

This survey has shown that the various reasons behind national governments' wariness of the human rights agenda have not been successfully allayed despite efforts to pave the way for a human rights

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regime. Mistrust of the human rights agenda has continued to be firmly entrenched within official mindsets on the basis of the contention that international laws and norms on human rights are still viewed as threatening to national sovereignty and jurisdictions. There is a pervasive ideology, either "manufactured" or entrenched that only a strong, benevolent, and authoritarian national state can act as the nexus of stability, order, and cohesion. In some ASEAN countries, citizenship rights are not of equal worth. Inequality in terms of gender, ethnicity, and religion is still an uncontested legal provision, making human rights advocacy impossible without prior societal restructuring at its most basic but politically taxing level, so as to elicit a minimal premise for human rights acceptance.[55]

In terms of periodic trends, one can observe four watershed periods in discerning the vicissitudes of a Southeast Asian engagement with the human rights question:

- **1990–93**: The beginning of Difference. In the post-Cold War era, "Asian values" were first asserted to promote Asian capitalism and the efficacy of the developmental state. In terms of major markers, there existed an official position to distance the ASEAN stance from that found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights through the 1993 Bangkok Governmental Declaration on Human Rights.
- **1993–97**: A period of great contestation and reassessment. At this time, an active debate was waged between the relativist and the universalist schools of human rights. There was an assertion of Asian and Islamic paradigms as credible counterweights to Western and liberal systems.
- **1997–2001**: The outbreak of the 1997 Asian financial crisis exposed the vulnerability of the "Asian values" school, providing a boost for the proponents of human rights universalism, witnessed by the outbreak of democratization movements in Indonesia and Thailand. In Malaysia, the formation of its national human rights commission was largely prodded by this public sentiment.
- **2001**: The beginning of Doubts. A discourse on "safety and security" following the 11 September 2001 fallout overtook that of "freedom and rights", causing many ASEAN governments to retreat from the hitherto "thawing" receptivity to a human rights commitment.

Throughout the post-Cold War period of East Asian economic take-off, ASEAN and the national governments were compelled to respond to some of the human rights challenges posed to them. They have gone reasonably far as to provide organizational support for a Working Group towards the formation of the ASEAN Human Rights Commission. Another limited, though significant, success of national

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governments has been the formation of at least four national commissions on human rights in the region. Although all the commissions have had their share of successes and setbacks in the discharge of their functions and independence, an "official channel with clout" has minimally been provided for human rights complainants.

Undoubtedly, there have been setbacks to the progress on human rights in the region due to the fallout of 11 September. The playing up of security issues has provided a convenient opportunity for a few ASEAN governments to deflect the population's attention away from the state's eroding "performance legitimacy" as they struggle with the continuing prospect of an uncertain economic rebound and renewal.

Clearly, a human rights culture is not inimical to the realities of local conditions. The biggest stumbling block remains the nature of the modern nation-state itself. Human rights mechanisms, enhanced by international instruments, are persistently seen as a threat to national sovereignty. Furthermore, the identity of Southeast Asian nation-states is crafted upon its ability to deliver economic welfare, which is, in turn, pedalled by the state as predicated upon the preponderance of public security and order. Thus, while the battle for the promotion of human rights may win the approval of the public, the war against the tyranny of the nation-state has yet to be won by the proponents of a universal normative cause such as that of human rights.

NOTES

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1. Amitav Acharya, "Southeast Asia's Democratic Moment", in *Asian Survey* 39, no. 3 (May/June, 1999): 418–32; and Lily Zubaidah Rahim, "Economic Crisis and the Prospects for Democratization in Southeast Asia", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 30, no. 1 (2000): 17–45.
2. For example, Joseph Chan, "An Alternative View", *Journal of Democracy* 8, no. 2 (1997): 35–48.
3. Inevitably, the argument for human rights can only be justified in its ability to deliver public order, as in the opinion of one government spokesperson, "To be sure, good government, human rights, and democracy are overlapping concepts. Good government requires the protection of human dignity and accountability... . But they are not always the same thing; it cannot be blithely assumed, as many in the West have, that more democracy and human rights will inevitably lead to good government... . Good government may well require, among other things, detention without trial ... curbs on press freedoms ... and draconian laws." See Bilahari Kausikan, "Asia's Different Standards", *Foreign Policy*, no. 92 (Fall, 1993): 30.

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4. For a useful collection of articles surrounding this debate, see Joanne Bauer and Daniel A. Bell, eds., *The East Asian Challenge For Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
5. The research and discussion for this article is largely confined to five countries in ASEAN — Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore. All except Singapore have established the office of the National Commission of Human Rights.
6. Peter Eng, "Transforming ASEAN", *Washington Quarterly* 22 (Winter, 1999): 49–65; and John Funston, "Challenges Facing ASEAN in a More Complex Age", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 12, no. 2 (August, 1999): 205–19.
7. See Roger Mitton, "Islam: The New Crusade", *Asiaweek*, 2 March 2001. According to this article, leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) are alleged to have close ties with the Malaysian Information Minister.
8. An argument on whether the origins of the 1948 UDHR are based on Western precepts is found in Stephen P. Marks, "From the 'Single Confused Page' to the 'Decalogue for Six Billion Persons': The Roots of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the French Revolution", *Human Rights Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (1998): 459–514.
9. Some of the countries which questioned the notion of the universality of human rights were China, Colombia, Cuba, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Pakistan, Singapore, Syria, Vietnam, and Yemen. See Christina M. Cerna, "Universality of Human Rights and Cultural Diversity: Implementation of Human Rights in Different Socio-Cultural Contexts", *Human Rights Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (November 1994): 740.
10. Vitit Muntarbhorn, "Towards an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism?" in *Towards an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism: Proposals, Declarations and Related Documents* (Manila: Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, 1999), p. 14.
11. Cerna, op. cit.
12. Yash Ghai "Rights, Social Justice, and Globalization in East Asia", in *The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights*, edited by Joanne R. Bauer and Daniel A. Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 241–63.
13. Rosemary Foot and Andrew Walter, "Whatever Happened to the Pacific Century?" *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 5 (December 1999): 245–69.
14. See Mahathir bin Mohamad "Western Modernism vs. Eastern Thought", in *The Voice of Asia: Two Leaders Discuss the Coming Century*, by Mahathir bin Mohamad and Shintaro Ishihara (New York: Kodansha International, 1999); and Fareed Zakaria, "Culture is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew", *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 2 (March/April 1994): 109–26.
15. Garry Rodan, "The Prospects for Civil Society and Political Space", in *Democracy, Human Rights, and Civil Society in South East Asia*, edited by Amitav Acharya, B. Michael Frolic and Richard Stubbs (Toronto: Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, 2001), p. 66.
16. Munthaborn, op. cit., pp. 9–14.
17. Carlos P. Medina, "Foreword", in *Towards an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism: Proposals, Declarations and Related Documents* (Manila: Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, 1999), p. ii.
18. At the time of the study in August 2001, the chairman was Marzuki Darusman, who was also the chairperson of the Indonesian Working Group. Chairpersons of the other working groups were Param Cumuraswamy (Malaysian Working Group), Marcelo B. Fernan (Philippine Working Group), and Praphan Hutasingh (Thai Working Group). The Secretary-General was Carlos P. Medina. See *Towards an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism*, p. 93.

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19. Interview with Rea Chiongson, Deputy Secretary-General of the Manila-based Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, 14 August 2001.
20. An early move was started in March 2001, when a Draft Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Human Rights Commission was prepared and submitted to all ten ASEAN governments for their response. The Agreement proposed the establishment of a sub-regional intergovernmental mechanism in the form of an ASEAN Human Rights Commission. It was proposed that the Commission be led by seven members, with a single non-renewable five-year mandate. See "Summary of the Draft Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Human Rights Commission: Underlying Principles and Elements", unpublished document prepared by the Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism (2000).
21. S. Sothi Rachagan and Ramdas Tikamdas, eds., *Human Rights and the National Commission* (Kuala Lumpur: HAKAM, 1999), p. 3.
22. For an explanation and background to the Paris Principles, see Brian Burdekin, "Basic Concepts of a National Human Rights Commission: An International Perspective", in *Human Rights and the National Commission*, edited by S. Sothi Rachagan and Ramdas Tikamdas (Kuala Lumpur: HAKAM [National Human Rights Society], 1999), pp. 65–74.
23. Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, 1997, available on the World Wide Web at http://www.krisdika.go.th/law/text/lawpub/e11102540/text40.htm#56; and Constitution of the Republic of Philippines, 1987, available on the World Wide Web at http://www.ldb.org/philcon/human.htm (2 December 2001).
24. Johannes L. Ignacio, "The Philippine Commission on Human Rights Revisited", *Human Rights Forum* 4, no. 1 (1994): 4–6.
25. Interview with Dr Charles Himawan, Komnas-HAM Commissioner, in Jakarta on 31 July 2001.
26. Prakob Chirakiti, "Developing Democratic Institutions and Processes in Thailand", in *Democratic Transitions in Asia* (Singapore: Select Books, 2001), pp. 68–69. Note that pressure for reform had been building since the early 1990s, particularly the 1992 massacre of pro-democracy activists, which shocked the nation and convinced many that it was time for a change.
27. Pasuk Pongpaichit and Chris Baker, "Thailand: Human Rights as People Politics", *NIASnytt: Nordic Newsletter of Asian Studies*, no. 1 (March 2001): 9–10.
28. The changes cited are "a more politically conscious electorate and dynamic civil society". SUHAKAM, *Annual Report 2000* (Kuala Lumpur: Human Rights Commission of Malaysia, 2001), p. 2.
29. The National Commission on Human Rights Indonesia (Komnas HAM), *Annual Report 2000* (Jakarta: The National Commission on Human Rights, 2001), p. 6.
30. Mission statement of the Philippines Commission on Human Rights, available on the World Wide Web at http://www.codewan.com.ph/hrnow/chr/body.htm (1 December 2001).
31. Komnas HAM, *Annual Report 2000*, pp. 9–10.
32. Tertiani ZB Simanjuntak, "Komnas HAM assures correct screening process in place", *Jakarta Post*, available at http://www.thejakartapost.com/Archives/ArchivesDet.asp?FileID=20011023.G03 (23 October 200).
33. Ken Bhattacherjee, "The National Human Rights Commission Act in Thailand", *Focus Asia-Pacific* 18, available on the World Wide Web at http://www.hurights.or.jp/asia-pacific/no_18/no18_thail.htm (December 1999).
34. Ibid.
35. From the Keynote Address given by SUHAKAM Commissioner Tan Sri Dato Harun Mahmud Hashim at the Third International Malaysian Studies Conference, Kuala Lumpur, 6 August 2001.

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36. In May 2002, thirty-two non-governmental organizations suspended engagement with the Commission for 100 days. Among the reasons was the government's appointment of a former Attorney-General as its new chairman, and five new commissioners who were former civil servants. The recently appointed SUHAKAM chairman once defended the arrests of 100 activists under the ISA in 1987. See "NGOs Launch 100 Day Boycott Against Suhakam", in http://www.malaysia kini.com (4 May 2002).
37. Ignacio, op. cit., p. 12.
38. Interview with Jacqueline B. Veloria Mejia, Executive Director, Philippine Commission on Human Rights, Manila, 16 August 2001.
39. Interview with Antonio Villasor, Executive Director, Philippine Human Rights Information Centre (PHILRights), Manila, 15 August 2001.
40. Interviews in Manila with Ryan Silverio (Youth Action Network ad PHILRights), Antonio Villasor (PHILRights), and Jacqueline Veloria Mejia (CHR), on 14, 15, 16 August 2001 respectively.
41. Interviews in the Philippines revealed growing concerns about minimum wage standards, land and environmental rights, and poverty relief.
42. "Komnas HAM comes under fire," *Jakarta Post*, available on the World Wide Web at http://www.thejakartapost.com/Archives/ArchivesDet.asp?FileID=20010922.A03 (22 September 2001). Among the NGOs calling for the resignation were the venerable Indonesian Legal Aid Institute Foundation, Kontras, and the Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy.
43. Discussions with members of Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW), 1 August 2001.
44. Interview with Kevin Evans, head of the UNDP Election Monitoring Unit, Jakarta, 30 July 2001. Komnas HAM Commissioner Charles Himawan similarly agreed that Parliament was now too strong, and political parties were estranged from the local community, while also being too strong, leading to a lack of direction other than self-interest (interviewed on 31 July 2001, in Jakarta).
45. "The Megawati Presidency", *International Crisis Group Indonesia Briefing* (10 September 2001), pp. 8–9.
46. A U.S.-based legal group has expressed doubts over the trials, saying that only an international tribunal could deliver justice. It said, "Given the current political climate in Indonesia, convictions of high-level military personnel seem unlikely." See, "E Timor rights court installed", in http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/asia-pacific/ (Thursday 31 January 2002).
47. Interview with Ramdas Tikamdas, past President of Hakam, Kuala Lumpur, 7 August 2001.
48. The government's response to SUHAKAM's findings of the Kesas Highway gathering was one of denial after it was found that the police were responsible for human rights violations. SUHAKAM's report was criticized by the government as being biased, influenced by the West, and against Malaysian values. See Leong Kar Yen, "Suhakam Stands by Report, Says Human Rights Are Universal", in http://www.malaysiakini.com/News/2001/08/20010822414.php3?print=1; Susan Loone, "Gov't To Consider Setting Guidelines For Suhakam's Principles", in http://www.malaysiakini.com/News/2001/11/2001110710.php3?print=1; Prema Devaraj, "SUHAKAM Not Acting in the Interests of Malaysia?" *Aliran Monthly* 21, no. 8 (2001): 20; and *Amnesty International Report 2002 — Malaysia*, in http://web.amnesty.org/web/ar2002.nsf/asa/malaysia!Open (Wednesday 29 May 2002).
49. Chiam Heng Keng, "Human Rights Commission — The Malaysian Scenario", *Focus: Newsletter of the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center* 26 (December, 2001): 9.

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50. Loone, op. cit.
51. Phongpaichit and Baker, op. cit.
52. Ibid.
53. Interview with Dr Suthin Nophaket, Commissioner for Human Rights, Bangkok, 9 August 2001.
54. Interview with Robb Stewart, Acting Director, Amnesty International Thailand, Bangkok, 9 August 2001.
55. In Malaysia, the Federal Constitution recognizes that special privileges be retained for the indigenous population. The Islamic Family *Syariah Law*, which is applicable to Muslims, is based on the tenet that inequality is justifiable on the basis of gender. Even Singapore, which may not recognize gender discrimination in its Constitution, also enacts official policies to discriminate against women. For example, in the 1970s the government introduced a quota system for medical schools which admitted lower-scoring males over higher achieving female candidates. The excuse was that too many women doctors were said to be leaving the profession to raise children after receiving lengthy and costly training subsidised by taxpayers. See "Review of Female Medical Student Quota", *Sunday Star*, 20 January 2002.

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Dragon on Terrorism: Assessing China's Tactical Gains and Strategic Losses After 11 September

J. MOHAN MALIK

Every major event in history has unintended consequences. A major unintended consequence of the U.S.-led war on terrorism has not only been to checkmate and roll-back China's recent moves at strategic expansion in Central, South, and Southeast Asia but also to tilt the regional balance of power decisively in Washington's favour within a short period of time, thereby highlighting how tenuous Chinese power is when compared to that of the United States. In this sense, 11 September 2001 should be seen as a major discontinuity or non-linearity in post-Cold War international politics. New strategic and political realities emerging in Asia put a question mark over Beijing's previous assumptions and beliefs. This article provides an assessment of China's tactical gains and strategic losses following the 11 September attacks on the United States.

Introduction

The U.S.-led war on terrorism, in the aftermath of the attacks on 11 September 2001, has radically altered the strategic landscape and ushered in new geopolitical alignments in Central, South, and Southeast Asia whose ramifications will be felt for a long time to come. This article argues that no other major power has been as much affected by the geopolitical shifts unleashed by the U.S. counter-offensive as China which has seen its recent foreign policy gains eroded; its long-term strategic goals compromised by the growing U.S. military presence all around China's periphery; the role and profile of its Asian rivals —

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India and Japan — increasing; while its new-found strategic partner, Russia, almost defecting to the American camp; and Beijing's much-touted model for multilateral diplomacy — the Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO) — sidelined in the face of Washington's post-September 11 unilateralism; and above all, China's carefully-cultivated image as Asia's only true great power being dealt a severe body blow. Ironically, all this has happened as China lined up along with the rest of the international community to condemn terrorism in the strongest possible terms and to declare solidarity with the United States in its hour of need.

The article begins with an overview of China's foreign policy goals and achievements prior to 11 September 2001, Beijing's response to the terrorist attacks on the U.S. mainland, and China's motivations and interests behind its support for the U.S.-led anti-terrorism coalition. The second part provides a critical assessment of China's perceived tactical gains and strategic losses, and concludes with an evaluation of Beijing's policy options in the fast-changing regional strategic environment.

China on the Move: Foreign Policy Goals and Achievements Prior to 11 September

The last decade of the twentieth century and the first year of the twenty-first century had seen China gradually moving closer to realizing its primary objective of emerging as the pre-eminent and predominant power in Asia, over and above Russia, Japan, and India. From Central Asia to the South Pacific Islands, China was seeking greater influence on a wider range of economic, military, and political issues and increasingly challenging the dominant position that the United States has held in Asia since the end of World War II. Revitalized by two decades of high economic growth rates, China was strengthening its traditional military alliances with Pakistan, Myanmar, and North Korea while forging new strategic and economic quasi-alliances with the former Soviet republics in Central Asia. Beijing was actively wooing Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, and Thailand in Southeast Asia so as to redraw geopolitical boundaries and to win regional footholds it has long coveted to project its influence around the Asia-Pacific. From Afghanistan to Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia, Beijing was building telecommunications networks, power stations, roads, highways, ports and airports, and acquiring mining concessions. In Kazakhstan, it was operating a multibillion-dollar oil-drilling facility while investing heavily in Mongolia's cashmere trade, Nepal's tourist industry, and the South

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Pacific Islands' fisheries trade.[1] This expansion was part of a strategic decision taken in the mid-1990s to cultivate key partnerships with major powers and those of China's neighbours that do not pose a threat to China's security and/or have shared cultural and political values, while simultaneously broadening efforts to bring an end to the U.S. military presence and alliance network in the Asia-Pacific. Beijing's efforts to establish constructive and co-operative partnerships with Russia, the United States, the European Union, and Japan were aimed at encouraging the trend towards multipolarity as well as reducing the possibility that the United States or other major powers (with or without U.S. backing) would thwart China's rise or frustrate its regional and global aspirations.[2]

Shedding its initial reservations about the efficacy of multilateralism, Beijing not only embraced it with full vigour but also began promoting multilateralism as an alternative to the Cold War era U.S. alliance network by making it the basis of its "new concept of security" (first outlined in 1997) to enhance China's reputation as a responsible, constructive, and co-operative player in both security and economic deliberations. Chinese leaders and officials took every opportunity to promote the formation of the Shanghai Forum (renamed in 2001 as SCO) in Central Asia in 1996 as an alternative to the Cold War era alliances and power politics. Furthermore, China's self-restraint in currency devaluation during the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and economic assistance to Thailand and other countries marked the high point of China's "charm" offensive. Beijing's sophisticated diplomacy on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and World Trade Organization (WTO) accession negotiations, co-operation on reducing tensions on the Korean Peninsula and in South Asia, helped it win friends and influence people throughout Asia.[3]

At the same time, Beijing remained uncompromising on core issues — such as Taiwan reunification, missile defence, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction technologies, and human rights — and became increasingly assertive (some would say, aggressive) in defending its territorial/maritime claims in the East and South China Sea. Double-digit increases in defence expenditure since 1989 and the ongoing military modernization with its special focus on a nuclear force modernization programme and an augmentation of air and maritime warfare, joint warfare operations, and information warfare capabilities gave the Chinese military a new sense of confidence and security. The development and acquisition of air and naval bases in Myanmar (close to the Strait of Malacca), Cambodia (Kompong Som/Sihanoukville Port), and Pakistan (Gwadar Port at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz) were seen as part of China's maritime strategy to position itself along the

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chokepoints of vital sea lanes from the Arabian Sea to the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, and monitor traffic between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.[4]

As the world's most populous and fastest-growing major economic power, China was seeking a bigger voice in world affairs and frequently voiced unease at what it saw as unbridled U.S. power. Beijing also seemed confident of being able to thwart any American moves to establish an "Asian NATO" by strengthening bilateral economic co-operation with Japan, South Korea, Australia, India, Taiwan, and other Asia-Pacific countries.[5] There was much talk of Beijing's coming challenge to U.S. supremacy in Asia. China was becoming aligned with Russia and increasing its strategic reach in the republics of Central Asia. In April 2001, China's relations with the United States hit rock-bottom when a Chinese pilot was killed after his fighter aircraft collided with a U.S. Navy EP-3 spy plane in international airspace near Hainan Island. Having demanded and obtained an apology from the Bush Administration for the spy plane incident, China not only enhanced its image as a great power by demonstrating its will and capability to stand up to the sole superpower but was also seen as defining the limits to U.S. power in the Pacific. The incident also convinced many Asian countries (especially small and middle powers) that the post-Cold War Asia-Pacific region was once again witnessing a return to the era of bipolarity, this time with the United States and China as the region's two great powers. Thus, nearly a decade into its role as the world's reigning superpower, the United States was facing an expansive rival and getting locked into another great power rivalry (and perhaps a new Cold War) with Asia's rising superpower — China.

China Checkmated: The 11 September Terrorist Attacks on the United States and Beijing's Response

It is said that every major event in history has unintended consequences, and the U.S.-led war on terrorism in the aftermath of the 11 September terrorist attacks in New York and Washington was no exception to this rule. As will be shown later, a major unintended (and unsettling, from Beijing's standpoint) consequence of the war on terrorism was that it served to highlight how tenuous Chinese power remains when compared to that of the United States. Within a short period of time, China not only slipped down the regional pecking order but also became more aware than before that the regional balance of power had suddenly tilted decisively in favour of Washington for reasons absolutely beyond Beijing's control. Before explaining the factors behind this sudden shift in power balance, a brief overview of Afghanistan's recent history is in

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order, followed by an examination of Beijing's official and unofficial response to the 11 September attacks.

During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989, the United States and China had collaborated in financing and arming resistance forces of Afghan *mujahideens* and Talibans (freedom fighters and Islamic students) through their mutual ally and frontline state, Pakistan, in order to evict the Soviets from that country. China had trained and dispatched Uighurs to fight against the Russians in Afghanistan, fearing that the old Silk Route along the Karakoram highway built across northern Kashmir could, in time, come under Moscow's domination if the Soviet Union was not dislodged from Afghanistan. The communist regime in Kabul, which was backed by Moscow and New Delhi, finally collapsed in 1996 — seven years after the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Afghanistan, and was replaced by a Pakistani military-backed radical Taliban Islamic militia, which tried to bring order to the war-torn country but failed. With Osama bin Laden making Afghanistan and northwestern Pakistan his base in the mid-1990s, the region became the epicentre of Islamic extremism, terrorism, and drug-trafficking. The blowback for Beijing was the return of victorious Uighur *jihadis* (holy warriors) to Xinjiang, where some of them fuelled the simmering insurgency for an independent Muslim Eastern Turkestan.[6] At the time of the 11 September attacks, the Pashtun-dominated radical Taliban regime was in control of 93 per cent of Afghan territory, but was recognized only by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, and was subjected to a series of United Nations (UN) Security Council sanctions for promoting terrorism, extremism, drug-trafficking, and human rights violations. The rest of the country was under the control of the moderate Northern Alliance (dominated by Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras) that enjoyed the backing of Russia, India, and Iran.

China's official response to the 11 September terrorist attacks was prompt and unequivocal. Describing terrorism as a "common scourge" for the international community, President Jiang Zemin, in his message to President George Bush, expressed "sincere sympathy" and offered "condolences to the family members of the victims".[7] Subsequent official statements were, however, more circumspect: China urged the United States and other countries to conduct their anti-terrorism military operations through the United Nations.[8] Beijing wanted an appropriate U.S. military response only after "consultations with the UN", and one directed at "those proven to be guilty", and "clearly defined targets", in "compliance with the international law", and avoided "civilian casualties".[9] Jiang Zemin's calls to other UN Security Council permanent members to reinforce these preconditions, however, did not please

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Bush Administration officials. Given the frosty state of Sino-U.S. relations in the preceding months, China-watchers were not surprised when, on 18 September 2001, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said:

> The United States has asked China to provide assistance in the fight against terrorism. China, by the same token, has reason to ask the United States to give its support and understanding in the fight against terrorism and separatists. We should not have double standards...[But] we are not making bargains here.[10]

Despite his denial that "we are not making bargains here", Zhu meant exactly what he said. Beijing was indeed "seeking a bargain — a Chinese promise not to veto proposed anti-terrorism operations in the UN Security Council in exchange for reduced U.S. arms sales to Taiwan".[11] Not surprisingly, this linkage unnerved Taipei. Taipei warned that Beijing must not be allowed to use the war against terrorism as an excuse to damage Taiwan's interests. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell felt compelled to deny any *quid pro quo* deal with Beijing.[12] By the time Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan arrived in Washington for talks with his counterpart, the Chinese side had abandoned all talk of linkage in favour of "unconditional, principled support" for anti-terrorism operations. Having made its expectations, if not conditions, known to the United States, China decided to earn some goodwill and gratitude by backing UN Resolution 1373 endorsing the use of force. The defeat of the radical Islamic forces in Afghanistan and elsewhere would serve China's long-term interests even though they never posed a significant security problem to China in the same way as they did to the United States, Russia, Israel, and India.

From time to time, however, reports focusing on China's record of past dealings with the Taliban regime continued to appear in the foreign media (see Table 1). These related to the Taliban's transfer of U.S. cruise missiles (fired in August 1998 at al-Qaeda camps) to China, Chinese firms' involvement in setting up the Taliban's telecommunications system, and the shipment of weapons through Pakistan. Describing such reports as "false", "absurd" and "anti-Chinese propaganda", the Chinese Foreign Ministry moved quickly to distance itself from the Taliban. However, U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld acknowledged that hundreds of Chinese artillery rockets, multiple-rocket launchers, rocket-propelled grenades, mines, and rifles were found in raids on Taliban and al-Qaeda camps in the Tora Bora mountains and elsewhere in Afghanistan by troops of the eighteen-nation International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). These weapons

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TABLE 1
China's Taliban Connection, 1998–2001

Year		*Key Developments*
December 1998	–	Five senior Chinese diplomats held talks in Kabul with the Taliban's Deputy Chairman Mullah Muhammad Hassan, Interior Minister Mullah Abdur Razzaq, and Deputy Foreign Minister Abdurrahman Zayef and obtained their assurance that the Taliban would not allow Afghan territory to be used against China. The Taliban transferred two unexploded U.S. Tomahawk cruise missiles to China for US$20 million each. In return, the Chinese agreed to: (i) start direct flights between Kabul and Urumuqi; (ii) open formal trade ties; (iii) increase Chinese food aid to Afghanistan; and (iv) provide arms and spares for Taliban's ageing military equipment.
October 1999	–	Annual felicitations conveyed by Mullah Omar (via Radio Shariat) on the occasion of China's National Day from 1999.
November 2000	–	A delegation from the Ministry of State Security-run think-tank, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, visited Kabul and Kandahar.
December 2000	–	A delegation led by China's ambassador to Pakistan, Lu Shulin, met with Mullah Omar, following the Taliban's plea to veto U.S.-Russian moves to tighten UN Security Council sanctions (including travel restrictions against Taliban officials).
2000	–	China's Huawei Technologies Co., accused of helping Iraq to upgrade its military communications system, signed a deal to install 12,000 fixed-line telephones in Kandahar.
	–	Another Chinese telecom firm, ZTE, agreed to install 5,000 telephone lines in Kabul after Pakistan provided a counter-guarantee for the project.
2001	–	China started the repair work on Afghanistan's power grid, damaged by years of war.
	–	The Dongfeng Agricultural Machinery Co. was hired to add 16.5 MW to power generation.
	–	The Chinese were involved in refurbishing the Herat Cement Plant.
	–	By late 2001, China had become the biggest investor in Afghanistan, with "legitimate" investments running to several tens of millions of dollars.
July 2001	–	A Taliban delegation, led by their Commercial Attaché to Pakistan, spent a week in China as guests of the government and met with some Chinese industrialists and businessmen.

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	– Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan met with a Taliban delegation whilst visiting Pakistan, and agreed to consider the Taliban's position on UN sanctions against Afghanistan.
August 2001	– Osama bin Laden called for cultivating closer Taliban-China ties to reduce U.S. influence.
September 2001	– A new protocol on Sino-Taliban commercial relations was inked on 11 September.
October 2001	– A Taliban military commander, Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani, claimed that China had maintained contacts with the Islamic militia even after U.S. air strikes had begun, and that Beijing was "also extending support and cooperation to the Taliban, but the shape of this cooperation cannot be disclosed." Beijing dismissed the commander's statement as "fabrication".
	– U.S. intelligence reports stated that China continued to supply arms (including Chinese-made SA-7 shoulder-fired missiles) to al-Qaeda terrorists after 11 September.
December 2001	– The Indian Government was reportedly considering deporting 185 Chinese telecom experts, suspected of developing telecom surveillance equipment for the Taliban, and working at Huawei Company's Bangalore office. China's ambassador to India issued a denial.
	– Defence Secretary Rumsfeld said that Alliance forces near Tora Bora had "captured a good deal of Chinese ammunition." The Chinese Foreign Ministry issued a strong rebuttal.
	– U.S. officials acknowledged that a few Chinese passport-holders were discovered among the fighters in Afghanistan.

SOURCE: A. Rashid, "Taliban temptation", *Far Eastern Economic Review* (hereafter cited as *FEER*), 11 March 1999; R. Chattoapdhyay, "China's Taliban Connection", *Bharat Rakshak Monitor* 4, no. 3 (November–December 2001); T. S. Sahay, "Taliban-China deal puzzles diplomats", *Rediff.com*, 12 February 1999; "Bin Ladin Calls for Taliban-China Good Relations to Reduce US Influence", *Ausaf* (Pakistan), 14 August 2001, trans. in FBIS; AFP, "China paid Laden for Access to Cruise Missiles", 9 March 2001; J. Pomfret, "China Strengthens Ties With Taleban by Signing Economic Deal", *Washington Post*, 13 September 2001; M. Hasan, "Taliban Team to Visit China to Boost", *Nation*, 4 July 2001; "Beijing Hopes to Gain from US Raids", *FEER*, 4 October 2001; D. Bristow, "China Flirts with an Independent Pro-active Afghan Policy", *Central Asia Analyst*, 3 January 2001; "China Firm Trades with Taliban", *FEER*, 15 March 2001; C. McLeod, "China–Taliban Deal Signed on Attack Day", *Washington Times*, 14 September 2001, p. 1; J. Iyengar, "Chinese Geeks to be Deported for Taliban Links", *Economic Times* (India), 10 December 2001, p. 1; B. Gertz and R. Scarborough, "Chinese Help Taliban", and "China-*al-Qaeda* Nexus", *Washington Times*, 23 November, 21 December 2001, p. 8; "China sold arms to *al-Qaeda* after Sept 11", 22 December 2001 <http://headlines.sify.com/399news4.html>; B. Gertz, "China-Made Artillery Seized In Afghanistan", *Washington Times*, 12 April 2002, p. 1; "China Denounced Ties with Taliban", *Beijing Review*, 27 September 2001, and 1 November 2001, p. 5.

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were most likely either smuggled into Afghanistan from China and Pakistan or left over from the 1980s, when Beijing, along with Washington, was a major supplier to the anti-Soviet *mujahideen* fighters.

Beijing also dispatched a team of counter-terrorism experts to Washington to explore ways in which both sides could co-operate, amid positive signs that China was willing to share "useful intelligence" on the al-Qaeda network. The Chinese agreed to allow the United States to station Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) officials in Beijing. This paved the way for the establishment of co-operative mechanisms with Washington on sharing intelligence, financial transactions, and law enforcement. The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress ratified China's accession to the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, and the State Council decided to be a party to the International Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism. Beijing seized the opportunity to redouble its efforts to crush various opposition groups, including (but not limited to) Uighur insurgents, some with al-Qaeda links, in Xinjiang province, where Beijing has long struggled to quell a nascent insurgency. Worried about the spill-over effect of U.S.-led military strikes resulting in the flight of al-Qaeda leaders into China's troubled western region bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan, Beijing also sealed its borders with both countries and put its border troops on high alert. Furthermore, China supplied a significant amount of food relief for refugees from Afghanistan. China also pledged US$150 million for the reconstruction of post-war Afghanistan and indicated that it might provide troops to a United Nations peacekeeping force in Afghanistan after U.S. troops withdraw.[13]

While President Jiang Zemin and others in the Politburo realized that China's interests lay with Washington following the 11 September terrorist attacks, some Chinese intellectuals and officials reacted gleefully to the attacks. The state-run media made much of the fall of the World Trade Centre twin towers as a humbling of American arrogance and a direct consequence of American "bullying" around the world. In other words, "America got what it deserved." Student postings on electronic bulletin boards were also highly critical of the United States in its dealings with developing countries. One comment was particularly telling: "We Chinese will never fear these people [Americans] again; they have been shown to be soft-bellied paper tigers." However, the Chinese authorities quickly cracked down on celebrations and rejoicing among some of their citizens and in Internet chat-rooms. Still, the official media played down the attacks, "suggesting a reluctance to acknowledge that America as victim had a right to take the battle to the aggressors".[14] There was also an expectation in official circles that the U.S. military operation in Afghanistan could turn out to be a long

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drawn-out affair, perhaps another Vietnam. As one commentary in the *Beijing Review* noted:

> Will the U.S. soldiers get stuck fighting the opposition with the same light weapons used by the Talibs, just as they once got stuck while fighting the Vietnam War? The Talibs have, after all, been fighting for 30 years and have grown up with rifles. They know the terrain by heart, and are adept at making ambushes. The ground forces of the United States and Britain will not be able to protect its rear, as not all of their communications and supply lines will be guaranteed.[15]

Apparently, behind China's "unconditional and principled support" lay the assumption that the United States would get bogged down in Afghanistan, and Washington's need for greater support in the conduct of the war would give Beijing the opportunity to extract concessions in the near future. At least, this is what the intelligence agency of China's most significant ally, Pakistan, had told the rulers in Islamabad and Beijing. Beijing seemingly "fell into the trap of believing Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) assessments from Pakistan that the anti-Taliban campaign would be protracted, that the US would get stuck with an unending quagmire and get seriously bloodied as the Soviets had experienced in the 1980s".[16]

However, the quick, sudden and total collapse of Taliban/al-Qaeda forces took everyone — its mentors (the Pakistani military), friends (Middle Eastern countries and China), and enemies (United States, Russia and India) — by surprise. For Washington, the swift military victory over the Taliban also obviated the need for any trade-offs with other countries. The rapid advance of Northern Alliance forces and the fall of Kabul upset Beijing's strategic calculations, made Pakistan feel squeezed again on its western and eastern frontiers, and led to a reconsideration of China's strategy. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf was summoned to Beijing for urgent consultations on a "common strategy for establishing peace and stability in the region". China reportedly shared the Pakistani concern over the situation arising out of Afghanistan's "occupation by the [Northern] Alliance forces".[17]

Consequently, the Chinese made specific recommendations for a post-Taliban government in Afghanistan: political solutions should be home-made, broad-based, and balanced; foreign troop deployments should be limited in both numbers and time; no-one should pressure the Afghans on how to sort out their affairs; and the "moderate Taliban" (that is, the Pashtun friends of Pakistan) should rule. Pakistan, desperate to salvage what it could from its Afghan misadventure, had long been pushing for accommodating less extreme Taliban elements in a post-conflict government, and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell had reluctantly agreed to it during his October 2001 visit to Islamabad to

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keep the Pakistani military regime on the U.S. side. Claiming that "moderate Taliban is oxymoronic", Russia and India, however, reacted by issuing a joint statement rejecting the U.S., Pakistani, and Chinese pleas for the inclusion of "moderate Taliban" in an interim government.[18] In an interview with the Italian daily *La Stampa* in late November 2001, Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan also demanded "*intervention by the United Nations and its Security Council* (where China has a say via its veto) *in a more intensive and active fashion*" (apparently to stall the political domination of the Northern Alliance forces), and cautioned that "the United States should not decide the future of Afghanistan all by itself". Beijing made these demands on the grounds that China is a neighbour of Afghanistan and therefore a potential victim of hostility and instability there. Furthermore, Tang for the first time officially gave a name to the insurgency in Xinjiang province as the "struggle for the independence of Eastern Turkestan".[19]

Some China-watchers have argued that China did not explicitly endorse the U.S. military action in Afghanistan and that Beijing's stance seemed "hesitant, tentative and reserved".[20] While U.S. and Chinese interests converged on the need to eradicate terrorist training camps and support networks in Afghanistan, the two countries did not necessarily agree on the best means to achieve this objective. The official reaction was also at variance with Chinese public opinion, which is highly nationalistic and frequently anti-American. However, nor did the Bush Administration, still smarting from the EP-3 incident, seem eager to enlist China's support and assistance. Beijing was treated as a secondary player, and in fact, President Jiang Zemin was not among the first round of world leaders that President Bush called before he authorized the U.S. military attacks in Afghanistan. Others contended that China's major contribution to the U.S.-led anti-terrorism coalition was in delivering its long-term ally, Pakistan, to Washington's war effort, and assuring Islamabad that decades of unwavering Chinese support would continue, and by bolstering China's frontline ally, Pakistan, with economic aid and diplomatic support. Soon after the attacks, Jiang Zemin tasked Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi as a go-between for the United States and Pakistan: he travelled twice to Islamabad, in late September and again in late November.[21] Beijing reportedly worked behind the scenes to persuade Pakistan to provide base access and overflight rights to U.S. military forces headed into Afghanistan. Assuming that that was the case, the U.S. Government did not publicly acknowledge any such Chinese assistance as it might have involved trade-offs. In fact, Washington made it very clear shortly after 11 September that it would not engage in any *quid pro quo* with Beijing.[22]

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On balance, China's response could at best be described as "pragmatic" and at worst as "muddling through". Since this was the first time China endorsed U.S. military action against a sovereign state, it was not an easy decision to arrive at. Beijing's attitude to the U.S. action in Afghanistan gradually evolved from an initial hesitance to strong backing as China realized that it could reap significant benefits from the U.S.-led war on terrorism. Nonetheless, the fact remains that Beijing's four key requests — that the United Nations should have a greater role in monitoring Afghanistan's peace; that the United States should view Uighur Muslim separatists in China as terrorists; that "moderate Taliban" be included in the future government; and more importantly, that there should be a cutback in U.S. arms sales to Taiwan — remained unfulfilled.

Tactical Gains and Transitory Benefits

A hard-nosed calculation of costs and benefits showed that Beijing stood to reap a range of benefits, at least in the short term, from its support for the U.S.-led war on terrorism.

First of all, it provided a welcome change from the U.S. focus on "the China threat" to a new common enemy requiring Sino-U.S. co-operation more than a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Prior to 11 September, relations between the world's most powerful country and its most populous one were heading towards confrontation over a whole range of issues. As soon as President George W. Bush took office in January 2001, he telephoned every major world leader except President Jiang Zemin, a clear signal of how the Bush Administration felt about China, an assumed strategic competitor. Then, Washington downgraded Beijing's priority for U.S. policy-makers, placing China well behind its Asian allies — Japan, South Korea, and Australia, and even India and Russia — for core foreign policy attention. For example, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage was sent to New Delhi to brief the Indian Government on U.S. missile defence plans, while the lower-ranking Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly went to Beijing for the same purpose.[23] Sino-U.S. relations hit their lowest point in April 2001 when a PLA (People's Liberation Army) pilot was killed after his jet fighter and an American navy EP-3 spy plane collided near Hainan Island. With talks on Chinese nuclear and missile proliferation to "rogue states" stalled, disputes over U.S. support for Taiwan persisting, and U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty with Russia despite China's objections, the anti-terrorism campaign emerged as the only bright spot in relations.

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Many Chinese analysts argued that Beijing should take advantage of the United States' eagerness for support to shore up its own often troubled relationship with Washington and thereby benefit from pursuing Beijing's own version of a "congagement" strategy *vis-à-vis* Washington to keep U.S. power in check. Jiang Lingfei noted with satisfaction that the conflict between the United States and China was "no longer the most important confrontation in the world" as "three forces — national separatism, religious extremism, and terrorism — have become the focus of international strife". This development "altered U.S. judgment of where the threat comes from, and also changed [its] attitude regarding China as the real strategic opponent, thus easing the tension in Sino-U.S. relations". He and others hoped that the watershed of 11 September would curb U.S. strategic expansion in Asia, and create conditions for China's peaceful reunification with Taiwan.[24] Beijing's cautious support for the anti-terror campaign did indeed bring China U.S. acquiescence, when Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian was not invited to the Shanghai summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum in October 2001.

To match words with deeds, Beijing granted approval for a U.S. aircraft carrier and its battle group to make a port call in Hong Kong in late November on their way to the Arabian Sea in what was seen as a sign of Beijing's logistical support for the war on terrorism.[25] Furthermore, at a time of slowdown in the U.S economy, the Chinese Government placed a US$1.6 billion order for Boeing aircraft. The Chinese leadership's response to the ring of military encampments that the United States established in Central and South Asia and the Philippines was restrained, as was its view of a new Japanese law authorizing military participation in the war. Some Chinese officials have made a point to emphasize that the U.S. military presence in the region contributes to peace and stability.[26] For example, the *Washington Post* quoted a senior strategist from the PLA as saying that the short-term presence of U.S. troops in Central Asia "might even be good for our [China's] security", a suggestion that would have been considered blasphemous before 11 September.[27]

For its part, the Bush Administration responded by dropping references to China as a "strategic competitor", a term used by the Bush Administration to differentiate its approach to China from that of the Clinton Administration. At the APEC meeting in October 2001, Bush referred to China as a "great power" and emphasized Washington's desire to shape a constructive relationship with Beijing. To some Chinese analysts, by the time President Bush arrived in Beijing for his second visit in five months, in February 2002, relations between the two countries had started to resemble the "constructive strategic partnership"

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that the Clinton Administration had aimed for. There is no denying the fact that a dramatic shift in U.S. priorities after 11 September contributed to an improvement in the overall atmospherics and tone of Sino-U.S. relations. In short, behind Beijing's solidarity with the anti-terrorism coalition lay great expectations of finding a common enemy once again to reconstruct a co-operative and strategic partnership with the United States after more than a decade of drift, distrust, and acrimony following the Soviet collapse.

Secondly, greater certainty and predictability in Sino-U.S. relations would facilitate domestic stability, ensure a smooth political leadership transition and sustain high economic growth in China. Maintaining a good, stable, and predictable relationship with the United States is considered vitally important for China's continued economic growth as the United States is the largest source of investment, capital, and technology, and provides the largest market for Chinese goods. In addition, at a time of domestic political leadership transition to the fourth generation (from Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao), Beijing hopes that the U.S. war on terrorism could be used internally to strengthen the hand of the Chinese regime against its opponents. From Beijing's perspective, an underlying aspect of the American campaign is that its thrust, throughout the world, will be to favour the cause of order and stability over chaos and instability. This also works to Beijing's advantage. This is because the examples of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Indonesia show that weak and failed states usually become hotbeds of terrorism and extremism. In short, preoccupied with social and economic problems following China's accession to the WTO and political leadership transition, Beijing wanted to avoid a confrontation with Washington that could jeopardize the economic benefits that flow from stable U.S.-China ties.

Thirdly, given the Chinese economy's growing dependence on oil imports, Beijing also shares Washington's interest in ensuring unimpeded oil supplies as well as stable, and low oil prices. Should major oil-producing countries in the Middle East and Central Asia fall victim to radical Islamic fundamentalism, such a development would potentially undermine China's economic development.

Fourthly, Beijing has interpreted the resumption of Sino-U.S. consultations on security issues of mutual concern as an acknowledgement of the limitations of U.S. unilateralism and as a net policy gain. Chinese analysts have concluded that the United States had learned that in the age of globalization and economic inter-dependence, security is indivisible. Washington could no longer afford to go it alone and would have to stop being so "highhanded, unilateralist, and hegemonic in its attitude towards others".

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Fifthly, overall improvement in U.S.-Pakistan relations is seen as a positive development for Sino-U.S. relations as well as regional stability. Beijing has become increasingly concerned in recent years about the gradual shift in the regional balance of power in South Asia with the steady rise of India, coupled with a growing Indo-U.S. *entente*, talk of "India as a counterweight to China" in Washington policy circles, and Pakistan's gradual descent into the ranks of failed states.[28] Since the end of the Cold War, a politically dysfunctional and economically bankrupt Pakistan has flirted with Islamic extremism and terrorism; these, added to Pakistan's nuclear and missile programmes, have alienated Washington. However, 11 September changed all that. Pakistan saw an opportunity to revive its past close relations with the United States, shed its near pariah international status, and enhance its economic and strategic position *vis-à-vis* India by instantaneously becoming a frontline state in the international coalition to fight global terrorism. In return, Washington lifted sanctions and agreed to provide Pakistan with billions of dollars in aid and debt rescheduling. From Washington's perspective, courting Musharraf made geopolitical sense because the Pakistani military not only knew a great deal about the Taliban, Osama bin Laden, and al-Qaeda but also because any U.S. military operation against Afghanistan could not be successful without bases, logistics, personnel, and airspace in Pakistan. Had Beijing told Islamabad to reject Washington's bid for an alliance against the Taliban, there may not have been any Islamabad-Washington-Beijing co-operation against terrorism.

In Beijing, there were great expectations of a sharp downturn in Indo-U.S. relations because in many ways what happens on the Indian subcontinent is unavoidably a zero-sum game, and China's and Pakistan's new relationship with the United States did affect India negatively.[29] A Chinese National Defence University specialist on South Asia, Wang Baofu, noted with satisfaction that under the new circumstances, "the United States, considering its own security interests, readjusted its policies toward South Asian countries and started paying more attention to the important role of Pakistan in the anti-terrorism war, therefore arousing the vigilance and jealousy of India". Wang criticized India for "defin[ing] resistance activities in Kashmir as terrorism by taking advantage of U.S. anti-terrorism war in Afghanistan, thus putting more pressure on Pakistan through the United States", and praised General Musharraf for his "clear-cut attitude toward fighting against international terrorism".[30] As tensions flared between India and Pakistan over suspected Pakistani-backed terrorist attacks on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001, Beijing rushed jet fighters, nuclear and missile

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components, and other weapon systems to shore up Pakistani defences in the border stand-off with India. General Musharraf visited Beijing twice in less than a fortnight for consultations with Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji, while General Zhang Wannian, vice-chairman of China's Central Military Commission, met with General Muhammad Aziz Khan, chairman of Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, and was quoted as telling Khan: "For many years the militaries of our two nations have maintained exchanges and co-operation at the highest and all levels and in every field. This fully embodies the all weather friendship our nations maintain."[31] Zhang's reference to "co-operation ... in every field" (meaning, nuclear and missile fields) was a thinly veiled warning to India to back off. Later, Beijing claimed some credit for mediating between the two sub-continental rivals.

China also took other measures to put Pakistan at ease. Chinese leaders lobbied the United States to provide liberal and long-term economic assistance to their frontline ally. Pakistan was promised about US$1.5 billion in U.S. aid to make up for war-related losses in tax revenue, investment, and exports, with more to come. For its part, China gave Pakistan emergency assistance totalling US$1.2 million during September–December 2001, in addition to an unspecified amount of aid announced during Musharraf's five-day visit. Chinese engineers and technicians, withdrawn from Pakistan because of security concerns after 11 September, were ordered to resume work on extensive investment projects there, which included copper mining, oil and gas exploration, and a US$200 million project to build a highway and naval base in Gwadar on the Arabian Sea.[32]

Another major dividend was the muted criticism of Beijing's "Strike Hard" campaign against separatists (in Xinjiang and Tibet), religious cults (such as the Falungong), and political dissidents. Knowing full well that the cases for Xinjiang and Tibet to exercise self-determination historically are much stronger than that of Kashmir or Chechnya, China has always been very sensitive to the issue of territorial integrity. China's support for the anti-terrorism operation was based on the assumption that its success would help Beijing solve one of the oldest problems faced by the Chinese empire: how to pacify, control and Sinicize Xinjiang and Tibet — two vast regions that occupy about 30 per cent of China's land mass and are rich in mineral resources, oil, and gas. Within days of 11 September, China sought to link the worldwide campaign against terrorism with its efforts against "separatism" in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Taiwan. Cloaking its actions in the rhetoric of counter-terrorism, Beijing seized the opportunity to redouble its efforts to crush various opposition and separatist groups, curtail

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religious freedom, and the voice of a restive ethnic minority because "it could now cast its support of the anti-terror campaign as morally correct, not merely politically expedient, and without worrying too much about human rights violations".[33] Nearly four months after al-Qaeda was implicated in the 11 September terror attacks, China's State Council Information Office issued a document entitled "'East Turkestan's Terrorist Forces Cannot Get Away With Impunity", which marked by far the most direct and first attempt by the Chinese Government to link — and thereby justify — its severe measures against the Uighurs in Xinjiang, with the American campaign against bin Laden's al-Qaeda.[34]

Finally, participation in the war on terrorism was supposed to enhance China's image as a responsible, rational and constructive player, and a good international citizen. Beijing's search for allies to counter U.S. global hegemony and its Asian rivals (India and Japan) has led China into dangerous liaisons with the proliferators of WMD (weapons of mass destruction) and into the arms of dictators from North Korea to Iraq. The war on terrorism provided Beijing with the opportunity to join the ranks of the world's leading nations rather than stand with rogue nations. The last thing Beijing wants to see is the United States, Europe, and Japan getting together to make decisions about the future of Asia without consulting China.

Strategic Losses, Shocks, and Reverses

It did not take long for the policy-making *élite* in Beijing to realize that most of the perceived policy gains and benefits for China were tactical, minor, and transitory in nature. Moreover, the U.S.-led war on terrorism was developing in ways that could not have been anticipated or foreseen, with potentially disastrous consequences for China's core strategic interests.[35] The reverberations from the military campaign against the Taliban/al-Qaeda were being felt outside Afghanistan's borders and bringing about a swift and radical shift in the regional balance of power.

First of all, serious Sino-U.S. differences persist over Taiwan, WMD proliferation, missile defence, human rights, and religious freedom. Despite a significant improvement in the atmospherics and exchanges of high-level visits, Sino-U.S. collaboration in the anti-terrorism campaign has at best papered over, and, at worst, widened the gulf between Beijing and Washington. As noted earlier, Beijing was hoping that an overall improvement in bilateral ties would make Washington sensitive to China's primary concern, that is, Taiwan.[36] However, Beijing watched with dismay and consternation as the Bush Administration took a series of "provocative measures" — granting a transit visa to the

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Taiwan Vice-President's New York visit in January 2002; inviting the Taiwanese Defence Minister to the United States; reiterating the primacy of the Taiwan Relations Act over three joint communiqués coupled with the promise to defend Taiwan if China attacked; the launching of the U.S. Congressional Taiwan Caucus; and, more importantly, approval of weapons sales and training programmes for Taiwan's military. These steps not only amounted to the most unambiguous backing of Taiwan in two decades but also unravelled decades of Chinese diplomacy aimed at getting the United States to limit its support for the island. The consolidation of power by President Chen Shui-bian's Democratic Progressive Party in Taiwan's December 2001 elections, and the decision to add the words "Issued in Taiwan" to the cover of Taiwanese passports were seen as setbacks to Beijing's reunification drive. Beijing responded by angrily warning the United States against testing Chinese resolve over Taiwan and accused the latter of exhibiting "dangerous tendencies" that risked confrontation.[37]

Furthermore, Chinese officials' hopes for a softening of the U.S. stance over the issue of WMD proliferation by lifting all sanctions on Chinese companies (including those imposed ten days before the 11 September attacks because of Beijing's non-compliance with the November 2000 non-proliferation agreement) also evaporated when the Bush Administration announced its intention to tighten controls on the export of certain high-tech products to China because of the perception that Beijing was a "problematic proliferator".[38] A month before President Bush's visit to China to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of President Nixon's first visit there, U.S. Ambassador Clark Randt described China's proliferation of strategic technologies to Pakistan and Iran as "a make-or-break issue for us". Two days later, on 24 January 2002, the State Department imposed sanctions on three Chinese entities found to be in violation of the Iran Non-Proliferation Act of 2000.[39] Apparently, the growing threat of WMD terrorism after 11 September, especially the prospect of Chinese-supplied Pakistani nuclear weapons falling into the hands of Islamic terrorists, had hardened Washington's stance over Chinese proliferation. In his meeting with Jiang Zemin, President Bush urged him to halt exports of missile technology and to co-operate with the United States to keep WMD out of the hands of terrorists and their state sponsors.

Washington's other actions were also far less reassuring. For example, the Bush Administration's decision to abandon the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty with Russia in order to pave the way for the development and deployment of missile defences was seen as an insensitive and ill-considered move that openly humiliated China despite the latter's support for Washington's war on terrorism. The fact

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that Beijing muted its once fiery response to this "destabilizing" move was a sign that China was feeling increasingly constrained by Washington's emerging global strategy.

Contrary to Beijing's expectations, the Bush Administration also refused to tone down its criticisms of Chinese policies on religious freedom and political liberties even as it urged Beijing to further support the anti-terrorism campaign. In fact, China's intensification of the crackdown on internal forces of extremism, separatism, and subversion in Xinjiang and Tibet led President Bush to caution President Jiang at the Shanghai APEC meeting that the war on terror "must never be an excuse to persecute minorities". Again, in late January 2002, Ambassador Randt warned that Beijing's membership of the coalition against terrorism was not a "devil's bargain" that gave it an excuse to persecute its ethnic minorities.[40] As one observer of Sino-U.S. relations pointed out: "Post-September 11, the relationship between the U.S. and China has not changed much. The rhetoric may have improved, but ties remain fragile and unstable, and as vulnerable as ever to sudden deterioration as a result of accidents, misperceptions, and eruption of unresolved bilateral issues."[41] In short, the war on terrorism has showed that U.S.-China relations are characterized more by shared exigencies than shared objectives.

Secondly, sharp differences have emerged over interpretations of terrorism and the broadening of the war on terrorism. As noted earlier, China's support for the U.S.-led anti-terrorism campaign stemmed from a self-serving goal of seeking legitimacy for its own battle against separatist forces in Xinjiang and Taiwan. However, much to Beijing's chagrin, the United States has flatly rejected attempts to equate the Uighurs' independence movement in Xinjiang with the Taliban or al-Qaeda, and has refused to lift post-Tiananmen sanctions that would improve Chinese military capabilities in Xinjiang on the grounds that China's internal problems have little or nothing to do with the events of 11 September. It is also well known that Osama bin Laden's primary focus has always been the United States' military presence in the Middle East and its pro-Israel policy. He has also trained fighters for the war in Chechnya against Russia and in Kashmir against India, but he has never made the same effort to train fighters for Xinjiang. This was partly because the Taliban/al-Qaeda network was created and backed by China's surrogate, Pakistan.[42] Moreover, Beijing's claims that the Uighurs have been inspired, encouraged, and supplied by al-Qaeda and the Taliban stationed in neighbouring Afghanistan flies in the face of the reality that the part of Afghanistan bordering China was never in Taliban hands but under the Northern Alliance's control, a constraining factor for any type of relationship between the Uighurs and terrorists

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across the border. It is also noteworthy that China, with Pakistan's help, tried all along to prevent the moderate Northern Alliance forces' victory over the radical Taliban.[43] Moreover, China's "Muslim problem" has never been as serious as India's in Kashmir, or Russia's in Chechnya. Being an autocratic state, the Chinese communist regime has often resorted to strong-arm tactics and mass executions without worrying about critical media scrutiny or public opinion fallout that democracies like India and Russia have had to contend with.

Such opportunism on Beijing's part could also damage the legitimacy of the global anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan and elsewhere.[44] That is why General Francis Taylor, the U.S. special envoy on counter-terrorism, turned down demands by Chinese officials for the repatriation of Uighurs captured in Afghanistan, saying that Washington did not support Beijing's effort to paint Uighur Muslim nationalists as terrorists. He revealed that the al-Qaeda had cells in fifty countries but did not mention China as one of those countries. General Taylor said: "Muslims in Xinjiang have legitimate economic and social issues that ... need political solutions, not counter-terrorism." To allay any misconceptions, he added: "The United States hasn't changed its values. We continue to hold very dearly our concern in areas such as human rights."[45] However, from Beijing's perspective, the U.S. stance on Xinjiang and captured Uighurs was "just another example of Washington's double standards on international issues — China's terrorists are not the same as the United States' terrorists". Differences over what constitutes terrorism has added further to Beijing's deep distrust of Washington's motives and intentions.[46]

Nor does Beijing like the idea of the anti-terrorism war becoming an open-ended war from Pakistan to the Philippines. The prospect of unilateral U.S. military interventions against Iraq or North Korea would surely exacerbate Sino-U.S. relations as Beijing has significant strategic and commercial interests at stake. The ongoing operations have received tacit acceptance by Beijing, but a future Chinese response might include insistence on the authority of the UN Security Council, and principles of non-intervention and non-interference in the domestic jurisdiction of a sovereign state.

Thirdly, the United States has emerged united and stronger from the war on terrorism, and U.S. military expansion and presence all around China's periphery in Central, South, and Southeast Asia is seen as part of a strategy to "encircle and contain China". U.S. military superiority — as demonstrated in the swift victory in Afghanistan — has once again stunned Chinese strategists, reinforcing feelings of military inferiority and potential vulnerability, and has upset their strategic calculations of a long drawn-out Vietnam-type conflict in

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Afghanistan. As a prominent Chinese defence analyst, Yan Xuetong, has put it:

> With an overall military budget of $331 billion — nearly 20 times China's stated defence budget — the U.S. is virtually unstoppable. The gap between the U.S. and other military powers is not just in quantity but also in quality. And this gap will make the U.S. become more and more unilateralist and care less and less about other countries' interests.[47]

As the United States deployed troops in the energy-rich regions of Central Asia and the Caucasus, acquired bases and increased influence in South Asia, and returned to Southeast Asia, the supposedly "brief" unipolar moment in history seemed to be turning into a long-lasting imperial moment — *Pax Americana par excellence*. Beneath the smiles and handshakes and talk of opening a new chapter in Sino-U.S. relations are the lurking fears of American encirclement and containment of China — a hot topic among Chinese strategists and foreign policy analysts. A powerful undercurrent of opinion reflects rising concern about U.S. actions and policies after 11 September, which many see as boosting the United States' already worrisome ascendancy on the world stage. To make matters worse, China saw one after another country that Beijing had hoped to woo as a potential ally in the global coalition against American hegemony, including Pakistan, Russia, and the Central Asian republics, forming new relationships with the United States.[48] Seen from Beijing's perspective, any recent tour of the strategic horizon is bleak and getting bleaker:

> Due to the special strategic geographic importance of Central and South Asia, the United States will not easily give up expansion in this area. Afghanistan is the communication hub of Central Eurasia. For the United States, control over Afghanistan and Central Asia could enable NATO to push forward its eastward expansion simultaneously from the east and west, while helping to join the U.S. military forces in Europe, especially in Turkey, with those in the Asia-Pacific region. In that case, the United States will be able to nibble away the strategic space of Russia to the north and threaten the security of west China to the east; while to the west, it will be able to contain Iraq and Iran, thus providing coordinated support for its troops in the Middle East, and, to the south, control the two nuclear powers — India and Pakistan... . Terrorist attacks on the United States gave it a good opportunity to expand globally... . Complete U.S. withdrawal from the region is unlikely and is even uncharacteristic of the United States, as it has seldom withdrawn troops from its overseas military bases since World War II.[49]

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Chinese strategists warn that U.S. strategy includes boxing-in China through an increased U.S. military presence in Central Asia (with long-term military bases in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan), by staying militarily engaged in Pakistan while forming a long-term strategic partnership with India in South Asia, and in Southeast Asia, in places such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, where it has returned with its special forces, and increased presence at Singapore's Changi Naval Base, or perhaps at Vietnam's Cam Ranh Bay, thereby strengthening its strategic role from Central Asia to Southeast Asia. Following the release of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar — another linchpin in Beijing's regional strategic designs — could move away from China's orbit as well, as have some Southeast Asian countries which have long been courted by China. Above all, "Beijing views a potential U.S.-Indian military alignment with horror. Paired with the U.S.-Japan alliance, it would bracket China and bring into concert with Washington Asia's other two major powers."[50] If China was on a roll prior to 11 September, in a complete reversal of roles after that date, it is now the United States that is on a spectacular roll. The U.S. strategic objective in Asia, according to Zhai Kun, is to "maintain its dominant position and balance among big powers in the region, and prevent China's influence from rising". With the United States taking a greater interest in Southeast Asia, whose security concerns were neglected by the Clinton Administration, it makes it harder for China to turn the South China Sea into a Chinese lake. The arrival of American military advisers in the Philippines drew mutterings of disapproval from Beijing. To quote Zhai Kun:

> Almost all U.S. official documents and academic reports believe that geopolitical and military conflicts will inevitably take place between China and the United States in Southeast Asia in the future... . Therefore, while strengthening its military alliance with the Philippines, the United States is restoring formerly suspended military exchanges with Indonesia and has enlisted Indonesia as a potential partner in Southeast Asia... . It is also going to enhance its naval supremacy in Southeast Asia by making full use of military facilities in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand through military agreements with these countries.[51]

The Chinese had obviously noted that the Pentagon's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), released on 30 September 2001, had identified Northeast Asia, and the East Asian littoral states as "critical areas" for U.S. interests which must not be allowed to fall under "hostile domination". The QDR characterized Asia as "emerging as a region susceptible to large-scale military competition" with a "volatile mix of

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rising and declining regional powers". Coyly avoiding naming the obvious challenger, China, the Pentagon warned of the possibility that "a military competitor with a formidable resource base will emerge in the region", adding that the lower "density of US basing" in this "critical region places a premium on securing additional access and infrastructure agreements".[52]

In short, long-standing fears of strategic encirclement are becoming a reality right before Beijing's eyes, and it is feeling utterly powerless to do anything about it. The Chinese believe that Russia, India, and Japan have all been big winners in this, and that the United States is probably going to have a better relationship with all of them, leaving China out in the cold. The fast-changing strategic scene not only undercuts Chinese ambitions to dominate Asia, but also hems in the one country in the world with the most demonstrable capacity to act independently of the United States. Not surprisingly, the start of 2002 saw Chinese political leaders and generals shedding their earlier inhibitions about publicly expressing concern over the growing "Southern Discomfort", that is, ever-expanding U.S. military power and presence in southern Asia after 11 September. China's Chief of the General Staff Fu Quanyou publicly warned the United States against using the war on terrorism to dominate global affairs by saying "counter-terrorism should not be used to practise hegemony".[53]

Fourthly, Beijing was shocked at President Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech and the Nuclear Posture Review which made China part of a "Gang of Seven" for possible nuclear strikes. China reacted angrily to President Bush's characterization of North Korea, Iran, and Iraq as an "Axis of Evil" in his State of the Union address in January 2002. If these "terrorist states" have anything in common, it is their "China connection". They all have significant strategic and commercial ties with China.[54] Strongly disapproving the phrase "Axis of Evil", Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan reiterated that, "China always holds that anti-terrorism campaigns should be based on irrefutable evidence, and anti-terrorism attacks should not be expanded arbitrarily."[55] Perceptions that the anti-terrorism campaign is nothing but an excuse for imposing U.S. hegemonism worldwide were exacerbated by a classified U.S. Department of Defence document, "Nuclear Posture Review", leaked to the press in March 2002. It revealed U.S. plans for the resumption of nuclear weapons testing, contingency planning for nuclear strikes against seven countries, including China (others were Russia, North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Libya), and consideration of a pre-emptive launch of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states to counter the use of chemical or biological weapons against the United States. In addition, the Bush Administration was

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reportedly preparing to develop a new generation of small, smart nuclear weapons to fulfill a wider variety of purposes, and deepen the integration of nuclear and non-nuclear weaponry in U.S. force planning.

Fifthly, China sees greater evidence of U.S. unilateralism as a setback for multilateralism. In the aftermath of the 11 September attacks, Beijing had hoped that Washington's need for allies in the war on terrorism would moderate the United States' ambitions for absolute security, and reverse the unilateralist trend characteristic of the Bush Administration's muscular foreign policy, or at least abandon some of its more controversial unilateralist positions on global warming, liberalization of international trade, missile defence plans, and its "overbearing and extremely supercilious" attitude towards China and Russia. However, Beijing soon discovered that its optimism was completely misplaced. If anything, America's short and swift military victory in Afghanistan emboldened the U.S. hawks to press ahead with their unilateralist tendencies. From its treatment of Afghan prisoners to withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, and Bush's labelling of Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as an "Axis of Evil", the United States appeared bent on doing whatever it wanted, against whomsoever it wanted, under the convenient cover of combating terror. As Shen Dingli noted: "After adjusting its way of handling international affairs a bit, [the U.S.] is returning to unilateralism." Zhang Guoqing observed in the *Southern Weekend*: "Under the banner of counter-terrorism, [the U.S.] can strike at will at those with differing views; it can loiter about and not leave Afghanistan or other strategically important areas; it can undercut the United Nations; it can use opposing terrorism as a bargaining chip in bilateral relations with other countries."[56] With dismay, China's leading English-language weekly, opened the new year with a commentary claiming: "The September 11 tragedy, however, has not weakened America's superior role in world dynamics; the United States has not given up its demand for world hegemony."[57] Many Chinese analysts now see the United States as being even more potent, strident, and implacable than ever before, a superpower able to get its way in more places around the globe, including China's backyard.[58] In short, China's worst fears of a unilateralist United States have come to pass and Beijing finds itself ill-equipped to deal with it.

Sixthly, Beijing's much touted multilateral solution to the security dilemma — the Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO) — failed its first test, and has been completely sidelined in the war on terrorism. The U.S.-led anti-terrorism coalition has been a major setback to China's most serious foreign policy initiative of the last decade — a Beijing-led and -dominated regional multilateral security forum, the SCO, which comprises China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and

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Uzbekistan. China sought to rely primarily on the SCO as an instrument to project its power and gain allies in Central Asia — a region which is a source of much needed strategic energy resources as well as a launch-pad for China's larger strategic aspirations in Southwest Asia. By carving out diplomatic space of its own in a region where Russia's presence and influence have been waning, Beijing has sought to secure its western frontier by creating a buffer for restive Xinjiang province, contain the forces of "separatism, terrorism and extremism", and most importantly, keep China's nemesis, the United States, out of the region.[59]

However, with the United States issuing a "with us or against us" ultimatum after 11 September and simultaneously dangling the carrot of long-term economic and military assistance in return for logistic support for America's war effort, each Central Asian state rushed to strike unilateral deals with the United States based on their own self-interest, thereby allowing the latter to establish a strategic foothold in Central Asia. For Central Asians, it was a golden opportunity to lessen the overbearing influence of their neighbouring giants (China and Russia). However, the lack of strategic policy co-ordination after 11 September among the SCO member-states left the multilateral forum seriously weakened, undercut the group's solidarity, and represented a "major failure for the fledgling group", established to provide a regional response to terrorism in the region.[60] It also highlighted the tenuous nature of China's "strategic influence" in Central Asia where local ethnic, and religious rivalries, and conflicting interests present formidable obstacles to Beijing's desire to knit the region's governments into a solid security partnership to further China's grand strategic objectives.

Nonetheless, Beijing (and Moscow) denied that the SCO had "lost any substance," and other Central Asian states continued to pay lip-service to the stated objectives of the forum. China did try to breathe some life into the SCO. At Beijing's repeated and urgent insistence, the group held one meeting on 11 October (exactly a month after the 11 September attacks) in Bishkek, which produced a statement that did not even mention the terrorist attacks against the United States and repeated previous pledges to co-operate against terrorism. Another attempt to salvage the SCO's reputation was made in early January 2002, again at China's initiative. A "non-regular meeting" of SCO foreign ministers articulated concerns about a growing foreign presence in the region. "Any attempts to impose this or that form of rule and drag [Afghanistan] into anyone's sphere of influence could lead to a new crisis in and around the country", stated a joint declaration of the SCO foreign ministers. It insisted that anti-terrorist efforts "must be devoid of bias and double standards", and stressed the importance of shifting

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the anti-terrorism battle to the United Nations' hands — insinuating that Washington should no longer dominate the issue, and strongly reflected other concerns of China but offered little that was new regarding substantive co-operation among SCO member-states.[61]

In short, within a matter of weeks, in a complete reversal of roles, Beijing's *bete noire*, the United States, an outsider and an onlooker before 11 September, had now virtually emerged as the *de facto* leader of Central Asia and its third powerful neighbour, while China, the SCO founder and leader, was reduced to the status of a spectator to the unfolding geopolitical machinations of Washington. In strategic terms, the infusion of an American presence into Central Asia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan has not only seriously upset China's security calculations on which its "expand west" strategy is predicated but also put a question mark over the efficacy of a China-sponsored multilateralism in a period of American unilateralism.

Seventhly, the greater prominence and growing security profile of China's Asian rivals — India and Japan — in the war on terrorism has worried Beijing. In the post-September 11 era, the heightened significance of India and Japan has emerged as an unpleasant reality for China, thus unravelling Beijing's Asia strategy of "restraining Japan and containing India" (or keeping Japan down and India out).[62] China's initial optimism that a new Sino-U.S.-Pakistan triangular co-operation would wean Washington away from New Delhi turned out to be wishful thinking as Bush Administration officials went out of their way to assure India that America's intensifying alliance with Pakistan would not come at India's expense. If anything, the current crisis has strengthened America's commitment to building stronger relations, including defence ties, with South Asia's superpower.[63] However, China does not want to see India raising its stature and profile regionally and internationally. Chinese strategists have long argued that China's pursuit of great power status is a historical right and perfectly legitimate but India's pursuit of great power status is illegitimate, wrong, dangerous and a sign of hegemonic, imperial behaviour. For its part, New Delhi has long accused Beijing of doing everything it can to undermine India's interests and using its ties with other states to contain India.[64] New strategic and political realities emerging in Asia, however, put a question mark over Beijing's long-held assumptions and beliefs. Checkmated in East Asia by three great powers — the United States, Japan and Russia — the major thrust of Chinese diplomacy during the last decade was at carving out a larger sphere of influence in Central and Southern Asia. Soon after the Taliban's overthrow in Kabul, Beijing and Islamabad watched with trepidation as the new foreign, defence, and home ministers of the interim Afghan administration paid visits to New Delhi to express their gratitude for

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India's long-standing support to anti-Taliban Northern Alliance forces and made critical remarks about Pakistan's expansionist designs from Indian soil. Islamabad retaliated by turning down Kabul's proposal to allow transportation of Indian goods to Afghanistan through the Wagah border post (on the Indo-Pakistan border), but offered to open the Khunjerab Pass (on the Sino-Pakistan border) for Chinese consignments.[65] India also stood to gain immensely both from the loss of Pakistan's "strategic depth" in Afghanistan with the collapse of the Taliban and General Musharraf's promise to take severe measures on Islamic fundamentalist organizations fomenting unrest in Indian Kashmir.

Much to the chagrin of Jiang Zemin and his Politburo, post-September 11 India is emerging at the centre of a resurgent *Pax Americana* scheme that envisages a pivotal role for India as a counterweight to China, on the one hand, and the fragile, radical Islamic states of West Asia, on the other. New Delhi is hoping that "a formal Indo-U.S. quasi-alliance would mean the final burying of the Kashmir issue — to India's advantage and bring access to the most advanced technology and capital essential to realising its great power ambitions".[66] Besides, India's strategic community supports the idea of a close and mutually beneficial relationship with the United States as a restraint on China's "destabilizing activities" (such as WMD proliferation, arms sales, and the acquisition of naval bases in Myanmar and Pakistan) in India's general neighbourhood. Earlier, when President Bush had unveiled his missile defence plan, New Delhi had responded far more positively than did most U.S. allies. More significantly, Indo-U.S. strategic engagement has scaled new heights with the announcement of a series of measures usually reserved for close U.S. allies and friends: joint military exercises in Alaska that would boost India's high-altitude warfare capabilities in the Himalayan glaciers of northern Kashmir where it faces Pakistan and China; the sale of U.S. military hardware, including radar, aircraft engines, and surveillance equipment to India; joint naval exercises and the training of India's special forces; and intelligence sharing and joint naval patrols between the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Hormuz.[67] Washington also gave the green light for Israel to proceed with the sale of AWACS (Airborne early Warning and Control System) to India — something that was earlier denied to China for fear of enhancing Beijing's air surveillance and early warning capabilities in the Taiwan Strait. All these measures sent an implicit signal to China of India's growing military prowess. An article in the *Beijing Review* by China's noted South Asia specialists expressed concern over the sale of U.S. arms to India which "enables it to become the first country to have close military relations with the world's two big powers — the United States and Russia".[68] Beijing is now concerned that New

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Delhi would use its strategic ties with Washington to bolster its position in its dealings with China. Nearly 70 per cent of China's trade with the European Union is carried by sea through the Strait of Malacca, the Indian Ocean, and the Suez Canal, and the predominance of the Indian Navy along these sea lanes is viewed as a major threat to Chinese security.

To the east, Beijing sees Japanese warships operating not only on China's maritime frontiers but also in the Indian Ocean — for the first time since 1942 — as part of the coalition against terrorism. Beijing believes that Japan's "rush to dispatch its troops overseas and to set up a kind of comprehensive military intervention system for overseas would ultimately have a negative impact on regional stability" and would "force Japan's neighbouring countries to react".[69] Even before 11 September, the Koizumi government was working towards the goals of a stronger alliance with the United States and the reassertion of Japanese geopolitical and military influence as Tokyo's worst nightmare is when China emerges as superior to Japan in terms of economic and military power. Premier Zhu Rongji has warned that Japan should be "prudent" in expanding its military role. Soon after Koizumi's Cabinet endorsed three new bills in April 2002 designed to give the Japanese Government and the Self-Defence Forces (SDF) more power in the case of external aggression, China voiced its concerns over Japan's move to expand its regional military role, urging Tokyo to abide by its commitment not to be a military power.[70] In the long term, as Japan widens its military co-operation with the United States, there could be increased friction between regional rivals, Japan and China, for power and influence in East Asia. In early May 2002, Prime Minsiter Koizumi also called for a broadening of Japan's security co-operation with Beijing's other Asian rival, India, which views China as representing a clear and future threat to its security. As one Asia-watcher noted: "The PRC must now look carefully at any Japanese-Indian political ties, to monitor the possible implication of moves which would inhibit the growing PRC moves to project overland toward the Arabian Sea, and by sea through the South China Sea into South-East Asia and the Indian Ocean."[71]

For the foreseeable future, China has no option but to engage in dialogue with the Indians and Japanese as the Asian strategic landscape transforms rapidly to China's disadvantage. An indication of this came in April 2002 when Beijing played down the provocative remarks of a leading Japanese opposition leader, Ichiro Ozawa, that "should China become too 'conceited', Japan would go nuclear and ... won't lose [to China] in terms of military strength".[72] Still, Beijing must now fear that just as Chinese and Pakistani nuclear missiles targeted on India prompted New Delhi to go nuclear, Chinese and North Korean missiles aimed at

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Japan could also tempt Tokyo someday to shed all its nuclear inhibitions. Undoubtedly, strategic shifts after 11 September show that Beijing has lost considerable ground to its Asian rivals.

Eighthly, a question mark hangs over the future of Pakistan and the future of Sino-Pakistan relations. China's strategic asset in Asia, Pakistan, where Beijing has made heavy strategic and economic investments over the decades, is now seen as a liability and as much a part of the problem as it is the solution. Though Beijing welcomes the new U.S. commitment to prop up Pakistan after a decade of abandonment and estrangement, some Chinese strategists worry about the possible destabilizing consequences of a prolonged U.S. military presence and increased influence on the future of Sino-Pakistan ties as well as on Pakistan's domestic stability. Already, Beijing is reportedly upset over the setting up of U.S. listening posts in Pakistan's northern areas, which border Xinjiang and Tibet, to monitor military activity in the region. The Chinese are also believed to be "highly uncomfortable" with the four U.S. military bases in Pakistan — at Jacobabad, Pasni, Dalbandhin, and Shamsi.[73] The U.S. presence in Pasni, Belochistan, is of special concern to Beijing, which complicates China's construction of a naval port at Gwadar, the inland Makran coastal highway linking it with Karachi, and several oil and gas pipeline projects. Beijing has long been eyeing Gwadar at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf as a bulwark against the presence of the United States and India's growing naval power.[74] Interestingly, the only thing that arch-rivals India and Pakistan now agree on is that the United States should remain strategically engaged in the South and Central Asian region. "I don't think America can give up its Central Asian presence now", Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh told the *Washington Post*'s Jim Hoagland. General Musharraf concurred: "The U.S. presence in the region must remain as long as it is needed."[75] The U.S. primary objectives (which enjoy India's support) in Pakistan are threefold: to stabilize the country so that it does not become a failed state or a haven for terrorists; to ensure stable control of Pakistani nuclear weapons so that they do not fall into the wrong hands; and to facilitate Pakistan's transition to a moderate Islamic state and a functioning democracy.

While a certain degree of tension in Kashmir and Pakistan's ability to pin down large numbers of Indian military forces on its western frontier are seen as enhancing China's sense of security, neither an all-out Indo-Pakistan war nor Pakistan's collapse would serve Beijing's grand strategic objectives.[76] One Chinese national security analyst was quoted as saying: "what worries China more is the possibility that it could be drawn into a conflict, not between Pakistan and India *per se*, but between Pakistan and the United States, with the latter using India

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as a surrogate. This likelihood is becoming even more plausible with the sweeping success of the U.S. operations in Afghanistan."[77] As tensions mounted in October-December 2001 between India and Pakistan over terrorist attacks on the Kashmir Assembly and Indian Parliament, PLA troops from the Military Regions of Chengdu and Lanzhou and their respective sub-divisions, the Xizang (Tibet) and Wulumuqi (Urumqi), along China's southern borders, were put on alert to test their war preparedness should the conflict in the Indian subcontinent spill over onto Chinese soil.[78] With the top al-Qaeda/Taliban leadership fleeing into Pakistan, it was becoming increasingly clear that the war against terrorism would zero-in on Pakistan as the next battlefield. However, this could bring the United States and Pakistan on a collision course, with India acting as a U.S. pawn. Such a development would obviously present China with difficult choices. Open support for its most important ally would jeopardize China's relations with the United States and India. Non-intervention on Pakistan's behalf, however, could encourage India to solve "the Pakistan problem" once and for all with or without a nuclear exchange and thereby tilt the regional balance of power decisively in its favour. Unrestrained Indian power would eventually threaten China's security along its soft underbelly — Tibet and Xinjiang. Should Pakistan disintegrate or be taken over by Islamic extremists, instability would rock the region and increase tensions among Pakistan, India, and China. Another scenario would be one in which Chinese-made Pakistani nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of the United States, Israel, or even India in the event of a civil war.[79] Should Sino-U.S. relations deteriorate, the U.S. military presence in Pakistan could further sharpen the divide within the Pakistani military between pro-West and pro-Beijing factions, with China supporting the latter to regain lost ground after 11 September.[80] For the time being, however, the only consolation for Beijing is that a stronger Pakistan aided by the United States, Western Europe, Japan, and international financial institutions, would be better able to contain rival India.

Ninthly, a question mark hangs over the future of the Russia–China "strategic partnership". Since the end of the Cold War, China has been strengthening ties with Russia so as to counter U.S. global hegemony. These diplomatic efforts culminated in the Jiang-Putin Summit of July 2001, when Beijing and Moscow signed a treaty of friendship and co-operation, which brought back memories of the (short-lived) Sino-Soviet alliance of the 1950s. However, after 11 September Jiang found his Russian partner defecting to the "enemy camp". President Putin seized the opportunity presented by the war on terrorism to forge a co-operative strategic partnership with the United States. Moscow's response and actions were also qualitatively different from Beijing's as

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they went beyond rhetoric and atmospherics. Putin agreed to share intelligence, opened Russian airspace to U.S. humanitarian and support flights, gave the green light to the stationing of U.S. troops and equipment in the Central Asian republics, provided arms and ammunition to anti-Taliban forces, and was unambiguous in saying that the war against the Taliban/al-Qaeda must be won, and decisively so. Russia also opposed Pakistan's entry into the SCO since Islamabad backed the Taliban, which exported terrorism into Chechnya and Central Asia.

Beijing was particularly irked by Moscow's mild reaction to the U.S. decision to pull out of the ABM Treaty at the end of 2001. A sense of gloom and abandonment "permeated the writings of Chinese commentators after Putin described it as a mere 'mistake' and went as far as to cast the U.S. move as a 'difference between friends' that should not crush 'the spirit of partnership and even alliance'" between Russia and the United States.[81] In return, Russia had obtained membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and billions of dollars in economic assistance from the West. Apparently, Moscow was indirectly signalling that it was not willing to concede hegemony to a rising China over the vast space between the Caspian Sea and Xinjiang. Clearly, the Afghan campaign marked the first stage of a new, and quite possibly historic, *rapprochement* between Russia and the West. Some Chinese strategists are already blaming Putin for not merely "losing Central Asia" but also for succumbing to a new American imperialism. Arguing that "the cooperation in the anti-terrorism campaign has not changed the long-term strategic conflict between Russia and the United States", they warn (apparently to sow discord between Moscow and Washington) that "no matter how Russia thinks, the United States has never taken Russia's military actions in Chechnya to equal its anti-terrorism operations in Afghanistan".[82] Beijing also expects an eventual clash between Moscow and Washington over the control of Central Asian oil and gas reserves. In an apparent attempt to assuage China's concerns about a growing *rapprochement* between Russia and the West, Putin told Jiang that "as Russia boosts ties with NATO, it will also maintain close links to China in an effort to strengthen global stability".[83] The message from Moscow is thus crystal clear: Putin wants to make Russia the pivotal country in a Eurasian balance-of-power game. This is no comfort to the Chinese who want Beijing, not Moscow, to be the pivotal player in Eurasia.

Finally, growing U.S. and Russian influence in Central Asia is seen as detrimental to China's interests (especially, control over energy resources) in the Great Game II. With growing instability in the Middle East, the race to exploit the energy resources of Central Asia has intensified in what is clearly Round II of "the Great Game". The U.S.

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military presence in Afghanistan and Central Asia, much like the oil-rich Gulf sheikhdoms, is a major strategic gain for Washington. Beijing believes that American recognition of the legitimacy of Russia's great power status in Central Asia is clearly part of the tacit bargain in the new U.S.–Russian realignment. (Moscow's acquiescence to NATO expansion is the other part.) The Pentagon's recent admission that it "is preparing a military presence in Central Asia that could last for years [and would include] periodic training exercises", and Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz's contention that "the bases' function may be more political than military ... to send a message to everybody ... that we have a capacity to come back in and will come back in — we're not just going to forget about [the region]", reinforced Beijing's fears of long-term containment.[84] Growing Chinese paranoia about the deepening American footprint on China's western frontier was evident in the summoning of Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister to Beijing in early May 2002 "to discuss the lawfulness of Kazakhstan providing bases to U.S. forces", which Beijing believes "runs counter to state agreements" — that is, the SCO Agreement against terrorism signed by China, Russia, and four Central Asian states in June 2001.[85] According to the Central Asia director at the China Institute on International Issues, Deng Hou: "By using anti-terrorism as the excuse to enter Central Asia, the United States has gained the upper hand in the bid to control Central Asia."[86]

From the Chinese viewpoint, Washington's actions threaten to destabilize the Middle East and Central Asia and, by extension, China's access to vital energy resources, and its ability to project force regionally and into the Middle East.[87] The country's growing oil and energy requirements and the need to distance himself from the United States' global strategy prompted President Jiang Zemin to undertake a whirlwind tour of Libya, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Iran in April 2002 where he secured Beijing's access to these nations' rich oil resources by pledging investment and presenting China as a powerful ally to the Islamic world.[88]

Overall, the war on terrorism has negated China's foreign policy gains of the last decade, undermined its carefully crafted image as Asia's only true great power, and energized the United States into playing a more assertive role internationally. While there is a broad consensus on crushing "the common scourge", serious differences exist between the United States and China (and others) on the ways and means of waging the war on terrorism which could defeat the very objective of the war. Of all the major powers, China is the biggest loser because unlike Russia, Japan, and India, it seems to be locked into a competitor relationship with the United States. Within a short period of six months, China's world has been turned upside down. The war on

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terrorism has unleashed a number of potentially threatening developments that could checkmate China's strategic moves and call into question predictions about China's inevitable rise as the next superpower. A major reason why one cannot confidently predict the future of international politics is that it is full of shocks and discontinuities, or non-linearity. In linear forecasts, the past is prologue, and forecasting is an exercise in linear extrapolation of past trends into the future. Thus, a straight-line, linear extrapolation of past experience into the future is the most common form of forecasting where continuity is the rule rather than the exception. However, forecasts often fail because no technique has been developed that allows one to predict, prior to the event itself, when a non-linearity (such as the 11 September terrorist attacks or the collapse of the Soviet Union) will occur; that is, when discontinuity will occur.[89] Non-linearity signals a complete break from past trends, a discontinuity. Japan and Indonesia are the prime examples of why predictions of the Asian security environment based on straight-line projections do not work. In the late 1980s, a number of studies based on linearity were published on "Japan as Number One" and "the Coming Conflict with Japan" before Japan went into prolonged economic recession. Likewise, before the Asian economic crisis in 1997, it was projected that Indonesia would have a GNP (gross national product) greater than Australia's by 2010. The shocks and discontinuities of the last ten years are instructive: the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Gulf War, China's rise and Japan's decline, and now the war on terrorism. This is why predictions about "China as the Next Superpower" also need to take into account the impact of shocks and discontinuities, both domestic and external.

Whither Chinese National Security Policy after 11 September: Policy Options

After 11 September, China is confronted with many external strategic challenges at a time when the country is likely to have the weakest political leadership (post-Jiang Zemin) with a relatively weak support base in the fifty-year history of the People's Republic. Hu Jintao and his team would feel increasingly constrained by domestic and international institutions, public opinion, powerful provincial leaders and various interest groups amidst growing social and political unrest. Popular distrust of the United States and resentment of its global power, fed by rising nationalism, run deep in Chinese society, and could add to problems for the new leadership. The Chinese public views the United States as placing increasing obstacles to China's emergence as a great power and to the reunification of China and Taiwan. Already, a direct

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consequence of the post-September 11 strategic shocks and reverses has been the widening of the schism within China's national leadership and security policy-making élite.[90] The hardliners (a majority) focus on the necessity of building a strong military in the light of an uncertain security environment. Believing in the "inevitability" of a clash with the United States, many PLA strategists and analysts believe that Beijing needs to demonstrate its strength, rather than act meek, in the wake of U.S. hegemonism and unilateralism. They want their leaders to confront and checkmate the United States over issues such as missile defence, Taiwan, and any expansion of the war on terrorism against China's friends and allies. On the other hand, the moderates (still an influential minority) prefer an accommodation with the United States, believing that access to the American market as well as American capital and technology are vitally important to becoming a modern, powerful country. They call for making tactical adjustments and a mix of astute diplomacy and greater flexibility even if it means putting up with American provocations. Although Chinese pride would demand otherwise, Beijing cannot afford to get into a serious confrontation with Washington for at least a decade or two. Classic Chinese statecraft dictates that diplomacy is the continuation of war by other means. Ultimately, China's remarkable economic growth will certainly change the distribution of wealth in the world and consequently tilt the military balance in favour of Beijing.[91] In other words, geoeconomics will eventually take care of any adverse geopolitical shifts.

Even though pieces on the geostrategic chessboard have been rearranged by Washington since 11 September, Beijing remains steadfastly committed to the goal of asserting the country's place as a great power. Chinese national security policy continues to be based on a careful, hard-nosed, *realpolitik*-based calculation of national interest. While domestic stability and economic growth remain priorities, Beijing will continue to resist perceived American attempts at hegemony and the containment of China. To this end, Beijing is likely to pursue one or more of the following policy options.

Wait-and-See Policy

In the short term, Beijing is likely to adopt a wait-and-see policy because the war against al-Qaeda is not yet over and it might still turn against the United States. Some in Beijing believe that there is currently a dangerous calm (perhaps a lull before the storm), but one step in the wrong direction or another major attack on the United States could easily unleash the storm. These false steps could come from Pakistan as it might become the next theatre for the war on terrorism. Should another war between India and Pakistan break out, New Delhi's hopes

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of an Indo-U.S. alliance to counter China may never materialize. A yawning chasm may in fact be emerging between the United States and the Muslim world, and this cleavage is likely to widen as the United States seeks to expand the war on terrorism in the near future, this time with possible action against Iraq. Since openly confronting the United States is not a viable option at the moment, the pragmatic Chinese would like to soft-pedal divisive issues, including Taiwan. Moreover, U.S. military expansion is at best nothing more than a temporary setback for China and, at worst, a classic example of imperial overstretch which cannot be sustained over a long period of time.

Counter-containment Strategy

Asia has become the fulcrum of major power rivalries. Beijing sees Tokyo aligning itself with a U.S.-led circle of containment that stretches from India via Southeast Asia and Australia right round to Japan. In response, Beijing could accelerate attempts to form a "United Front" by strengthening ties with like-minded countries that are critical and apprehensive of the United States and its allies — in other words, a counter-containment strategy which raises the costs for Washington and puts pressure on countries to choose sides. For example, in Southeast Asia, China's leaders are working on strong, co-operative economic and political partnerships and have made significant inroads, as demonstrated by the signing of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement in November 2001. Southeast Asia is now China's fifth-largest trading partner — after Japan, the United States, the European Union, and Hong Kong. Elsewhere, Beijing will constantly be on the look out for ways to undo the damage inflicted by unfavourable developments along its periphery.

WMD Proliferation

Beijing has long played "the Proliferation card" to irritate Washington and curb U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. China could step up WMD proliferation to its friends in the Islamic world and North Korea to gain strategic leverage (to countervail the United States, India and Japan) as well as for economic gains (access to critical energy resources and to earn hard currency).

Multilateralism

Beijing could place renewed emphasis on regional and multilateral approaches and demand a greater role for the United Nations in conflict resolution.

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Military Build-up
A short and swift U.S. military victory in Afghanistan — the third U.S. victory in about a decade, after the Gulf and Kosovo wars of 1991 and 1999 respectively — has once again stunned Chinese defence planners and strengthened their resolve to accelerate comprehensive military modernization and weapons acquisition programmes.

Improvement in Ties with Asian Rivals, India and Japan
The dramatic changes in the security dynamics of Asia may lead to a reassessment of the Chinese policy towards strategic rivals, India and Japan. This could result in some conciliatory gestures aimed at buying time that seek to promote common economic interests while downplaying strategic differences.[92] However, the possibility of any major strategic breakthrough, whether Sino-Japanese or Sino-Indian, remains very low because neither the end of the Cold War nor the war on terrorism has ended major power competition and rivalry.

Conclusion

The U.S.-led war on terrorism has presented the Chinese leadership with very difficult, and mostly unpleasant choices. Beijing is still counting its losses and picking up the pieces from the wreckage of its regional security design amidst shifting Asian alliances brought about by the U.S.-led war on terrorism. While it is true that some of the strategic developments (such as the Bush Administration's plans to establish missile defences and closer U.S. ties with Japan and India) were under way prior to 11 September, the war on terrorism has undoubtedly accelerated their pace and legitimized the anti-Chinese geopolitical shifts in motion. Until the leadership transition process is complete in Beijing and the new leadership crafts a way to deal with the new strategic equations, China will continue to walk a fine line in dealing with the United States, Russia, Japan, India, and Taiwan, while never losing sight of long-term strategic conflicts that are likely to arise. Despite recent setbacks, Beijing will not abandon or compromise on its territorial claims to the Spratlys, the Senkaku Islands, and Taiwan, nor its goals for a decisive role in Northeast Asia, a leading role in Southeast Asia, and a military presence in the Indian Ocean. It is said that each conflict simply prepares the ground for the next one, or every war contains the seeds of another war. Whether the war on terrorism will lead to another war or a clash of civilizations, only time will tell. One thing is certain, however: China will in the future be the most important factor in both regional conflicts and security co-operation.

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NOTES

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The Role of Philippine–American Relations in the Global Campaign Against Terrorism: Implications for Regional Security

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Philippine support for the American-led global campaign against terrorism has reinvigorated Philippine–American relations. The two countries are presently involved in combating terrorism in the southern Philippines through a joint military exercise called Balikatan 2002–1. Reinvigorated Philippine–American relations have implications for regional security because an American military presence is re-established not only in the Philippines but also in Southeast Asia. When the United States withdrew its military forces from the Philippines after the termination of the Military Bases Agreement in 1991, it created a power vacuum in the region. The United States now finds it imperative to re-establish its presence in Southeast Asia because of reported al-Qaeda activities in the region. However, China is wary of the U.S. military presence, arguing that it is intended to deter not only terrorism but also China's moves in Southeast Asia.

Introduction

When the United States called for global support to combat terrorism in the light of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks (hereafter referred to as 9/11), the Philippines immediately responded by granting the United States over-flight rights for its military aircraft.[1] The Philippines also offered Clark Air Field and Subic Bay Naval Base for use by the

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International Coalition Against Terrorism as transit points or staging areas for troops fighting the war against terrorism in Afghanistan. Philippine President, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, even expressed a willingness to deploy Philippine troops to Afghanistan, contingent upon approval by the Philippine Congress.

American officials have praised the Philippine Government's support in the global campaign against terrorism and have described the Philippine initiative as "outstanding". The Americans even commended President Arroyo for being "very quick to speak up, very quick to take action" to help the United States fight international terrorists.[2] During the six-month anniversary of 9/11, President George W. Bush in his twenty-minute speech singled out President Arroyo for "courageously opposing the threat of terror".[3] President Arroyo was the only head of state mentioned by President Bush in this speech. To recognize Philippine support in combating terrorism, the Bush Administration promised President Arroyo that the United States would give the Philippines US$92.3 million in military equipment to bolster not only its ability to counter terrorism but also to increase its wherewithal to fight local insurgents.[4]

This exchange of mutual support is a landmark in Philippine–American relations as it revives the once ailing security alliance between the two countries. When the Americans closed their bases in the Philippines as a result of the termination of the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) in 1991, Philippine–American relations hit their lowest point, with the security relationship being practically moribund.

President Arroyo's full support for the U.S.-led war on terrorism and strong commitment to the United States in combating the terrorist network in Southeast Asia reinvigorated Philippine–American ties. This prompted one American security analyst to describe the Philippines as an American "front-line state in the war on terrorism".[5] What are the implications of reinvigorated Philippine–American relations for regional security? This article will examine the role of Philippine–American relations in the global campaign against terrorism and its implications for the security of Southeast Asia.

A Historical Background to Relations

Philippine relations with the United States have played an important role in the security of not only Southeast Asia but also the entire Asia-Pacific region. Those relations began as early as 1898 when Filipino and American troops collaborated against Spain, which had been the

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colonial master of the Philippines for 333 years. Then President Emilio Aguinaldo responded to the request of Commodore George Dewey to provide Filipino assistance against a "common enemy". Dewey provided arms and supplies to Filipino forces while Aguinaldo sent manpower to fight Spanish forces.[6]

In the aftermath of the Spanish–American War, a vanquished Spain ceded the Philippines to the Americans in the Treaty of Paris. That Treaty became the basis of American rule in the Philippines. With the Treaty of Paris, the United States established colonial control of the Philippines based on the American perception that the Philippines was an important strategic outpost in the Asia-Pacific.[7] Even then, U.S. President William McKinley viewed the Philippines as a strategic country with strong potential in servicing the United States' commercial and naval needs.[8] American businessmen also saw the Philippines as a strategic gateway to the rich markets of Asia, and a hub for American trading activity in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Philippines as a Strategic American Colony: 1898–1935

From 1898 to 1935, the Philippines became an important strategic colony of the United States. The Philippines served as a vital instrument of American policy towards Asia and the Pacific. At that time, the United States was looking for new opportunities and lands, driven by its need for raw materials to feed its industries and to serve as markets for its goods. The Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act of 1909 was the American legal instrument to promote "free trade" in the Philippines, until 1934 when the Tydings-McDuffie law re-imposed the quota system.[9]

During the American colonial period, there were moves among the Filipino élite to legally seek Philippine independence in the U.S. Congress.[10] Some of the Filipino élite went to the United States on independence missions until the U.S. Congress passed on 17 January 1933 the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Law.[11] The law provided for a ten-year Commonwealth Government in the Philippines. It also allowed the establishment of U.S. naval, air, and other military reservations in the country.

However, Manuel L. Quezon opposed the law and sought in the United States the passing of another law, the Tydings-McDuffie Law, which was essentially no different from the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Law. As a result of the Tydings-McDuffie Law, the Philippines, with the blessings of the United States, established the Commonwealth Government of the Philippines on 15 November 1935, with Quezon as President. The Commonwealth provided the Philippines a ten-year transition period before the assumption of full independence in 1945.

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America in the Philippines Defence System

With the Commonwealth Government, the Philippines passed the Commonwealth Act No. 1, otherwise known as the National Defence Act of the Philippines. This Act mandated the setting-up of a Philippine defence system supported by a citizens' army consisting of a regular force of around 10,000 personnel, and a reserve force of about 400,000 personnel. It also intended to establish a Philippine Navy and an Army Air Corps. The Americans played an influential role in this defence system when Quezon conferred on General Douglas MacArthur, the retired Chief-of-Staff of the U.S. Army, the title of Field Marshall of the Philippine Army.

With the establishment of U.S. military reservations in the Philippines, and with the active involvement of MacArthur in the Philippine defence system, the Philippines became a prime target for Japanese aerial bombardments right from the start of World War II.[12] Quezon attempted to secure from the United States full Philippine independence and to declare the Philippines a neutral state to prevent Japanese attacks, but to no avail.

Japanese Colonial Rule

The Japanese established a puppet government in the Philippines on 3 January 1942 when the Japanese commander-in-chief officially declared the end of U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines.[13] Quezon evacuated to the United States where he established a Commonwealth Government in exile.

Filipino radicals opposed Japan's colonial rule of the Philippines. Filipino resistance groups, such as the Hukbalahap (Hukbo ng Bayan Laban SA Hapon, or Filipino Resistance Army Against Japan) and the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (Philippine Communist Party), spearheaded a national liberation movement against the Japanese Imperial Forces.[14] Through the combined forces of the Filipino resistant groups and the U.S. Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) headed by General MacArthur, Japanese Imperial Forces were finally subdued, resulting in the liberation of the Philippines. The United States claimed to have granted the Philippines independence on 4 July 1946, a date coinciding with the anniversary of America's independence.

Philippine Independence

The Philippines has the worldwide distinction of being the first country to gain independence and form a U.S.-style democratic government in Southeast Asia. This American-style democracy was the strong glue that bound Philippine–American relations after World War II. Since

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then, the main part of Philippine diplomatic history has been the history of relations with the United States.

Philippine–American relations overwhelmingly guided Manila's foreign relations after World War II.[15] Philippine diplomatic history was "one of American action and of Philippine reaction".[16] Even then President Manuel Roxas, during his inauguration speech as President of the Third Philippine Republic, asserted that his conviction was to "subscribe irretrievably" to U.S. foreign policy and to commit "to the cause and international program of the U.S. for America".[17]

The "Unequal" Treaties

On 4 July 1946, the Philippine Government signed two important agreements with the United States that legally defined the parameters of Philippine–American relations: the 1946 Philippine–American Treaty on General Relations and the 1946 Philippine–American Trade Act. Eight months later, the Philippine Government signed the Philippine–American Military Bases Agreement (MBA) on 14 March 1947, which the Philippine Senate ratified on 26 March 1947. In addition, a Philippine–American Assistance Pact was signed on 21 March 1947.

These agreements served American economic and security interests in the Asia- Pacific region. For example, the MBA supported the U.S. Seventh Fleet, which used Subic Bay Naval Base in Olongapo. The Thirteenth U.S. Air Force was posted at Clark Air Field in Pampanga. These U.S. bases became instrumental to American strategy during the Korean and Vietnam wars. When the United States withdrew from Vietnam, the American bases in the Philippines served as the only U.S. overseas bases in Southeast Asia, which underpinned America's forward defence strategy in Asia and the Pacific. Filipinos resisted these agreements because they were negotiated at a time when the Philippines lay prostrate from the heavy devastation of World War II.[18]

The Idea of Collective Defence

To provide "collective defence" to both countries, the Philippines and the United States signed a Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) on 30 August 1951. It was signed at a time when the Philippines was saddled with post-war reconstruction concerns. The Treaty recognized that "an armed attack in the Pacific Area on either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes".[19] Nationalist Senator Claro M. Recto opposed the Mutual Defence Treaty, arguing that it did not contain any provision for automatic retaliation

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from the United States. Moreover, Recto underscored the fact that the Treaty was vague and did not amount to any commitment at all. He urged for an automatic retaliatory formula similar to that of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).[20]

The Bases Pull-Out and the Fading of Philippine–American Relations

From 1946 to 1992, the issue which predominantly shaped Philippine–American relations was that of the U.S. military bases.[21] When the Philippine Senate rejected the proposed Philippine–American Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Security in 1991, the Americans withdrew their forces from the Philippines.[22] The proposed treaty could have extended the stay of U.S. forces in the country. In 1992, the United States withdrew its last remaining troops from the Philippines. As a result of the U.S. withdrawal, the "once-strong" and "once-special" Philippine–American relationship became essentially moribund.[23] Since the U.S. bases had long been regarded as the "linchpin of a partnership built around a network of bilateral and multilateral arrangements between the Philippines and the U.S.", the security relationship between the two countries was left on uncertain ground.[24]

The only legal framework guiding Philippine–American security relations in the post-bases period was the 1951 MDT. After the U.S. withdrawal, both countries repeatedly reaffirmed the MDT as the anchor of their security relationship. However, they were unable to fashion new and mutually acceptable defence ties until 1999 when the Philippine Senate ratified the Philippine–American Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA).[25]

VFA Ratification

The two countries signed the VFA in the midst of various security uncertainties in the Asia-Pacific. The Philippines signed the VFA to primarily deter the perceived creeping assertiveness of China in the South China Sea. The weak condition of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the lack of Philippine wherewithal to respond to the rise of transnational security concerns in the region also convinced Manila to ratify the VFA. The ratification of the VFA is believed to have renewed but not necessarily revived Philippine–American security relations. The VFA provides the legal framework for the two countries to resume joint military exercises. It also lays down rules governing the conduct of American troops while on Philippine soil. The VFA is said to have provided substance to the MDT, reminding both countries of their "special relations".

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The War on Terrorism and the Reinvigoration of Philippine–American Relations

Since the VFA ratification, the Philippines and the United States have been conducting joint military exercises under the series called "Balikatan". The present war on terrorism reinforces the conduct of Balikatan, with an added dimension on anti-terrorism. The Balikatan 2002–1 exercises have reinvigorated the once dormant Philippine–American alliance,[26] and relations have recently been described as at their peak because of the exercises. There are at least three justifications for the reinvigoration of Philippine–American relations:

- The Philippines has active militant Muslim groups, particularly the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), believed to have links with the al-Qaeda Group (AQG) of Osama bin Laden;
- The Philippines has a Mutual Defence Treaty (MDT) with the United States, making the Philippines a reliable U.S. ally in its international anti-terrorist campaign; and,
- The Philippines has a Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) with the United States, which justifies Balikatan and the presence of American troops on Philippine soil.

The MILF and al-Qaeda Link

With the existence of the MILF and the ASG, the Philippines reportedly became one of al-Qaeda's operational hubs. The MILF link with al-Qaeda can be traced back to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. When Osama bin Laden established the al-Qaeda in 1988 to wage an international *jihad* (holy war) in Afghanistan, he reportedly directed Mohammad Jamal Khalifa, his brother-in-law, to go to the Philippines and recruit Filipino Muslim fighters for the Afghan war. The MILF, through the leadership of Hashim Salamat, was reported to have sent a thousand Filipino Muslim fighters to Afghanistan to undergo military training. Salamat saw the training of these Muslim fighters as vital to the strengthening of the MILF as a splinter group of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) headed by Nur Misuari, who later became Governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and is presently incarcerated for an alleged act of rebellion. Khalifa left the Philippines in 1990 but returned to the country in 1991 to establish "a permanent al-Qaeda network".[27]

Khalifa's front organization in the Philippines was believed to be the Islamic International Relief Organization (IIRO). It was a charitable organization registered on 20 September 1991 in the Philippines at the

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Securities Exchange Commission (SEC). In the SEC document, Khalifa was listed as president and chairman of the board of trustees of the IIRO.[28] One of the incorporators of the IIRO was Jameela Yabo, the Filipina wife of Khalifa and sister of Abu Omar, who was then studying at Mindanao State University. Khalifa used Yabo and Omar as conduits to infiltrate Muslim Filipino communities through various charitable activities. While doing these "charitable" activities in the Philippines, Khalifa reportedly used the Philippines as al-Qaeda's base for other international terrorist operations.[29]

Through the IIRO and other Muslim relief groups, Khalifa reportedly channelled money to provide financial support to the MILF. Al Haj Murad, the MILF Vice Chairman for Military Affairs, even admitted in an interview, held some time in 1998, that bin Laden and Khalifa had helped and assisted MILF cadres in Afghanistan.[30]

The ASG and the al-Qaeda Link

Apart from the MILF, the ASG is believed to have established links with al-Qaeda. ASG founder, Ustadz Abdurajak Janjalani, was reported to have befriended bin Laden while in Peshawar, Pakistan. Janjalani also became a very close friend of Ramzi Yousef, who reportedly planned, in the Philippines, the Bojinka plots, which are believed to have been the worst terrorist plots in the country. The Bojinka plots were essentially attempts to bomb eleven U.S. airliners and assassinate Pope John Paul II, who visited Manila in 1995.[31]

During his trip to the Philippines via Malaysia, Yousef reportedly stayed in Basilan and trained about twenty ASG fighters. The Philippine National Police revealed that in September 1994, Yousef had fully established a cell of terrorists in the Philippines. Among the purported members of Yousef's cell in the Philippines were the following:[32]

- Wali Khan Amin Shah: a "Pakistani-Afghan" national reported to be a very close associate of Yousef. Wali Khan had travelled extensively to the Philippines, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Thailand using seven passports with different names, but all bearing the same photo of himself. He was believed to have been the overall financial manager of the Yousef cell.
- Abdul Hakim Ali Hasmid Murad: a Pakistani national reported to have arrived in the Philippines between November 1990 and February 1991. In December 1994, he came again to the Philippines to participate in the Bojinka plots, to assassinate the Pope. He was trained in bomb-making and in flying commercial aircraft. He was arrested in 1995, having been convicted for the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing in the United States.

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- Abu Omar: a Filipino national who became the brother-in-law of Khalifa. Omar reportedly used a charitable organization as a front to channel money to and fund the terrorist activities of local Muslim militants.
- Munir Ibrahim: reportedly a wealthy Saudi Arabian from Jeddah who came to the Philippines to support terrorist activities in the country.
- Salem Ali/Sheik Mohammad: a person who claimed to be a plywood exporter, who befriended Rose Mosquera, a bar-girl in Quezon City. Mosquera opened a bank account for Salem Ali at the Far East Bank at the SM Megamall. Salem Ali was said to have also supported terrorist activities in the Philippines.
- Mohammed Sadiq Odeh: reportedly participated in various terrorist operations in the Philippines in the early 1990s and was convicted for his participation in the 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassy in Kenya.

The Mutual Defence Treaty and the Philippine–American Response to Terrorism

The 9/11 terrorist attacks and the presence of homegrown terrorists in the Philippines with historic and financial links to the al-Qaeda prompted the Philippines to maximize its relations with the United States to combat terrorism. To demonstrate the Philippine commitment to the existing Philippine–American security alliance, as mandated by the MDT, the Philippine Government was the first Asian state to declare full support to the U.S.-led International Coalition Against Terrorism. The Philippines offered Clark and Subic for use by the International Coalition as transit points or staging areas for troops fighting in Afghanistan, and expressed a willingness to deploy Philippine troops if requested by the international community and subject to the approval of the Philippine Congress. Through the MDT, the Philippines allied itself with the U.S. against terrorism.

To also express the Philippine Government's strong resolve in combating terrorism, Manila formed an Inter-Agency Task Force Against International Terrorism on 24 September 2001. The purpose of this Task Force was to co-ordinate intelligence operations and to facilitate the identification and neutralization of suspected terrorist cells in the Philippines. To freeze the financial assets of international terrorists, the Philippine Congress passed the Anti-Money Laundering Act on 29 September 2001. President Arroyo also announced a fourteen-pillar approach to combat terrorism, as follows:

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- Designated a Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security as the lead anti-terrorism body;
- Sought to undertake a consolidation of intelligence projects;
- Called on the armed forces and the Philippine National Police (PNP) to address terrorist violence;
- Held accountable all public and private organizations seen to abet terrorism;
- Sought a regional consensus, and especially co-operation with Indonesia and Malaysia in the war against terrorism;
- Anticipated legal issues and concerns;
- Pursued Christian–Muslim dialogue and sought to promote ecumenism;
- Called for greater vigilance and concrete measures against all possible terrorist supplies, materials, and finances;
- Mobilized disaster co-ordination efforts in the event of major terrorist attacks;
- Attempted to secure critical infrastructure;
- Protected overseas workers and sought their immediate transfer if needed;
- Sought the integration of the global terrorist threat in the AFP/PNP modernization programme;
- Asked for media responsibility; and,
- Sought to address the socio-economic and political roots of "perceived fanaticism and irrational violence".

With this fourteen-pillar approach to combat terrorism, the Philippines welcomed the presence of American troops to conduct joint military exercises. President Arroyo facilitated U.S. military involvement in the Philippines to:

- maintain and secure future co-operative engagement activities with the United States;
- enhance domestic security through improved military capabilities; and,
- gain American assistance in the war against the country's Muslim separatists.[33]

During the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the MDT, the United States promised to assist the Philippines in acquiring new military equipment that will include a C-130 transport plane, eight Huey helicopters, a naval patrol boat, and 30,000 M-16 rifles plus ammunition.[34] The United States has, in fact, been sending

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its military advisers to assist the Philippine military in anti-terrorist training and strategy.

The VFA, RP-U.S. Balikatan 2002–1 Exercises and the War on Terrorism

The VFA provides the legal justification for conducting the Balikatan 2002–1 exercises. Balikatan (the word literally means "shoulder-to-shoulder") is based primarily on the MDT, requiring the two countries to conduct joint exercises to develop their capacity to resist aggression and to combat common adversaries.

Filipino and American forces had been conducting these exercises even before the 9/11 attacks. Since 1981, Balikatan has been held almost annually, until 1996 when it was suspended because of questions regarding the legality of U.S. forces visiting the country for purposes of joint training. The signing of the VFA in 1999 saw the resumption of Balikatan. The present Balikatan 2002–1 exercises focus on counter-terrorism. They were launched in February 2002, and have four specific objectives:

- To improve the interoperability of Philippine and U.S. forces against terrorists;
- To enhance the combat capability of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Southern Command, or Southcom, infantry battalions based in Mindanao;
- To ensure quality in intelligence processing; and,
- To upgrade Philippine-U.S. capabilities to wage effective civil, military, and psychological operations.[35]

Balikatan 2002–1 exercises are also being guided by the following terms of reference (TOR):

1. The exercises are to advise, assist, and train the Philippine military in its efforts against the Abu Sayyaf, in Basilan and Zamboanga. Related support activities are to be conducted in Cebu.
2. It is to be carried out and completed within a period of six months, with the participation of 660 U.S. personnel, and 3,800 Philippine troops.
3. Only 160 U.S. troops organized in twelve-man Special Forces Teams would be deployed with AFP field commanders.
4. U.S. troops would not engage in combat operations, without prejudice to their right to self-defence.[36]

The United States is training Filipino soldiers within the framework of the Balikatan 2002–1 exercises not only to eliminate indigeneous

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terrorists linked to Osama bin Laden but also "to prevent the Philippines from becoming a haven [for] future terror groups".[37] Philippine National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said, "the Basilan training could serve as a model for training by U.S. forces of troops in Yemen and Georgia, which Bush indicated could also be future havens [for] terror groups".[38]

The U.S. Department of Defense views the Balikatan 2002–1 exercises as designed to improve Philippine–U.S. combined planning, combat readiness, and interoperability.[39] The training is also intended to enhance Philippine–American security relations and to "demonstrate U.S. resolve to support the Philippines against external aggression and state-sponsored terrorism".[40] According to Admiral Dennis Blair, the recently retired Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command (CINCPAC), America's "largest military operation against terrorism [outside of Afghanistan]" is presently in the Philippines, where a U.S. Joint Task Force is providing training, some equipment, intelligence support, and advisers to the AFP.[41] The most notable feature of Balikatan 2002–1 is the revitalization of the Philippine–U.S. security alliance after almost a ten-year hiatus in the two countries' bilateral security ties.[42]

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Implications for Regional Security

Because of the previous role that the Philippines had played in U.S. Southeast Asian security policy, the reinvigoration of Philippine–American defence ties has implications for regional security because of the following perceptions:

- Through the Philippine–American Balikatan 2002–1 joint military exercises, the American presence has been significantly re-established not only in the Philippines but also in Southeast Asia;
- Reinvigorated Philippine–American relations enhance the American network of strategic bilateral alliances in the Asia-Pacific. When tied together, this network of alliances could be useful as a counterweight against any potential aggressor in the region; and,
- The American military presence in the Philippines does not only deter terrorism in Southeast Asia, but also in other countries that are suspicious of the U.S. regional presence.

A Regional Coalition Against Terrorism

The reinvigoration of Philippine–American relations has enhanced U.S. strategic alliances in Southeast Asia. This is part of Washington's plan to strengthen relations with countries sharing common regional interests. To consolidate regional efforts in combating terrorism in

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Southeast Asia, the United States has proposed to link its military exercises with the Philippines in the context of the U.S.-initiated Exercise Team Challenge (ETC). ETC is a multinational military exercise involving major American friends and allies in Asia, such as Australia, Singapore, and Thailand.[43] In fact, the Philippine Government has already initiated a regional coalition against terrorism with the member-states of ASEAN. The Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia commenced the formation of this regional coalition by signing, on 7 May 2002, the Trilateral Agreement on Exchange of Information and Establishment of Communication Procedures as a regional counter-terrorism measure. The agreement is part of Southeast Asia's battle against regional militant groups through the mutual exchange of information. The United States has welcomed the agreement because it is designed as a deterrent against potential terrorist threats and other transnational crimes in Southeast Asia.

Thailand, Singapore, and Brunei have shown interest in this regional coalition.[44] In March 2002, Thailand, another U.S. ally in Southeast Asia, hosted the planning conference of the Southeast Asia Cooperation Against Terrorism (SEA-CAT) exercise. Attended by participating navies from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and the United States, SEA-CAT is the first of its kind. Its purpose is to establish a regional co-ordination infrastructure for information-sharing and exchange, supporting a multinational response to combat terrorism.

The China Factor

There are fears in Beijing that the U.S. military presence in the Philippines is not merely for the purposes of dealing with terrorists but is also directed at China. The Texas-based think-tank, Strategic Forecasting Inc. (Stratfor), has said that the United States is using the global war on terror to spread its forces in Asia and increase its influence in a region that is steadily coming under China's shadow.[45] Some American security analysts have viewed China as a power with the potential of being an American strategic adversary in the Asia-Pacific region.[46] Although 9/11 had a positive impact on U.S.–China relations, having increased contacts between Beijing and Washington, at the strategic level the United States still considers China a threat.[47]

China welcomes the U.S. role in maintaining a generally stable security environment in Asia. However, Beijing is critical of the U.S. military presence in the region, in general, and in the Philippines, in particular, because of the perception that it is intended to "constrict" Chinese activities in the region, specifically related to the South China Sea.[48] In its 2000 Defence White Paper, China had already expressed

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alarm at the U.S. strengthening its military presence and bilateral alliances in the region.[49]

The aftermath of 9/11 and the heightened American presence in the Philippines have unleashed some repercussions on China's strategic posture in Southeast Asia. After 9/11, China reportedly changed its security calculus and forced it to re-evaluate its geopolitical position *vis-à-vis* its relations with the United States, and with other claimant states to the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.[50] However, General Richard Myers, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, has emphasized that the target of the increased U.S. military presence in Southeast Asia is terrorism and not China.[51] He said that Balikatan 2002–1 is "not an issue about China" but an issue "about our presence in the region to promote stability and... good commerce".[52]

The Philippine Government has also paid attention to the sensitivities of China *vis-à-vis* the revitalization of Philippine–American relations. The Philippines does not want its relations with China to be affected by the reinvigorated Philippine–American ties. To demonstrate the Philippines' strong resolve to establish constructive co-operative relations with China, Manila is engaging Beijing in the war on terrorism through the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum, the ASEAN+3 mechanism, and through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

The Taiwan Issue and the Bases Factor

Another regional implication of reinvigorated Philippine–American relations is the perception that the U.S. presence in the Philippines is part of a strategic package to defend Taiwan. The RAND Corporation revealed a study arguing that the United States has established a plan to set up a small base in Zamboanga, as part of the "defence of Taiwan". RAND argues that, "As far as the Philippines is concerned, the strategy would entail expanding co-operation with the Philippines to support Taiwan if need be".[53] RAND has even identified Zamboanga International Airport as a place to establish a small American base because it "is fairly well suited to fighter operations, with runway dimensions significantly larger than a minimal base and parking space for two or three squadrons of aircraft types".[54] The former American military facilities at Clark have also been identified as a very good location because of "ample parking space for at least a wing of fighter size aircraft and runway dimensions adequate for the majority of USAF aircraft, including heavy bombers and strategic air-lifters".[55]

The U.S. Department of Defence (DOD) Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR) of September 2001 has re-affirmed this idea. Given all the changes

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in the international security environment and the DOD's new strategic approach to defence issues and concerns, the QDR states that the U.S. global military posture will be re-oriented to "develop a basing system that provides greater flexibility for U.S. forces in critical areas of the world, placing emphasis on additional bases and stations beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia".[56] In the absence of a permanent basing system, the QDR states that the U.S. global military posture be re-oriented to "provide temporary access to facilities in foreign countries that enable U.S. forces to conduct training and exercises".[57]

China has expressed some concern at the presence of U.S. forces in the Philippines and its link with the issue of Taiwan. However, Admiral Blair has stressed that U.S. forces in the Philippines "certainly will not be there in permanent bases".[58] To assuage the fear of some nations about the idea of permanent basing arrangements with the Philippines, Blair stressed that: "We [the Americans] will be in temporary bases [only] working with our Philippine allies."[59] The Philippine Government has also underscored that it would "never allow the establishment of foreign military bases in the country", arguing that to do so would violate the 1987 Philippine Constitution.[60] The Philippine Government, however, is amenable to the possibility of an American presence in the country on a temporary basis for purposes of advancing common security interests in Southeast Asia.

Conclusion

The campaign against global terrorism has reinvigorated Philippine–American security relations. As a result of ongoing Philippine–U.S. joint military exercises against terrorism, bilateral security relations are now at their peak. The Philippines' reinvigorated relationship with the United States has implications for regional security because of the traditional role this relationship has played in the management of peace and stability in Southeast Asia. The Philippines welcomes the United States because of the recognition of their existing alliance, as provided for by the MDT. Moreover, the interests of the Philippines and the United States have converged on the issue of terrorism, justifying the reinvigoration of their alliance. Both have the specific objective of crushing the ASG and other terrorist groups in Southeast Asia.

What will happen when and if the ASG is destroyed? Will the reinvigorated Philippine–American relations continue? When the campaign against terrorism is over, what will then be the course of Philippine–American relations? How will this affect Philippine–China relations?

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It can be argued that the reinvigoration of Philippine–American relations would not prevent the Philippines from enhancing its relations with China. Although the Philippines has a dispute with China over territory in the South China Sea, it is not an issue that will be unbridgeable between the two countries. If the war on terrorism has provided the glue that has bound the Philippines and the United States, the South China Sea might well serve as the sea that links, rather than divides, the Philippines and China.

NOTES

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The Legacy and Lessons of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

PAULO GORJÃO

Between October 1999 and May 2002, UNTAET exercised sovereign control over East Timor, and the state-building mission was viewed by many as a test case of governance. Although bearing in mind its so-called uniqueness, the aim here is to evaluate UNTAET's legacy, and to highlight the lessons from this experience. After reviewing major events at different levels, the article argues that, as far as legacy is concerned, the evidence is mixed. UNTAET was neither an astounding success nor a complete failure. As to possible lessons, it is argued that the problems faced by UNTAET must be placed into two different categories: efficiency; and accountability and legitimacy. UNTAET's experience suggests that, while it is feasible to fully overcome the first kind of difficulty, it is only possible to attenuate the second type of constraint.

Introduction

During the Cold War, traditional United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations had to cope with cases of international conflict, which required the UN to monitor ceasefire agreements and buffer zones. This first generation of peacekeeping operations was followed by new missions with new goals when the global order evolved. With the end of the Cold War, the UN has become involved in a second generation of peacekeeping operations, related to domestic rather than international conflicts, and requiring "civilian administrations and policemen, as

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well as soldiers, to oversee the implementation of peace plans negotiated by the parties in conflict that have agreed to resolve their disputes at the ballot box".[1] In each case, the parties involved had earlier accepted the UN presence and, therefore, UN peacekeepers only used force to defend themselves. Meanwhile, a third generation of peacekeeping operations, which did not require the consent of the parties involved, has emerged under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This development overlapped with the appearance of "coalitions of the willing" with a mandate from the Security Council to undertake specific enforcement actions, such as the International Force East Timor (INTERFET).

It was against this background that a UN mission was undertaken in East Timor, a mission seen by some as the precursor of a fourth generation of state-building operations,[2] and by others as a classic case of decolonization.[3] The UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) was established by UN Security Council Resolution 1272 on 25 October 1999, endowed with overall responsibility for the administration of the territory and empowered to exercise all legislative and executive authority, including the administration of justice, during the period of transition from Indonesian administration until formal independence. At the same time, it also had many other tasks to accomplish, such as providing security, maintaining law and order, establishing an effective administration, assisting in the development of civil and social services, ensuring the co-ordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development assistance, supporting capacity-building for self-government, and assisting in the establishment of conditions for sustainable development.

UNTAET's scope of responsibilities and the range of the mandate were without any precedent in the peacekeeping or peacemaking operations that came before (UNMIK [UN Interim Administration in Kosovo] is the only, but partial, exception). For the first time, the UN had sovereign control over a trust territory, and UNTAET was a "trusteeship administration" preparing a territory for independence.[4] In other words, there was a "combination of UN governorship with the strategic objective of independent statehood".[5] As such, it was a state-building mission, and this was viewed by many as a test case. In fact, it was considered that UNTAET would have to invent a functioning state of East Timor.[6] Between October 1999 and May 2002, the territory became a laboratory for an experiment of governance, and UNTAET was the *de facto* sovereign in the territory. With so much at stake, and now that UNTAET's mandate has expired, it is apt to evaluate its performance. Some questions are particularly relevant. What were the results of the experiment? Did it accomplish the goals established by

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UN Security Council Resolution 1272? Were there any lessons learned from this experience? What kind of legacy did it leave in the new sovereign state of East Timor?

The Establishment of UNTAET

In 1999, after twenty-four years of occupation, Indonesia finally allowed a popular consultation — Jakarta refused to call it what it really was, a referendum — to take place in East Timor.[7] The United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) was responsible for the organization and conduct of the popular consultation, on the basis of a direct, secret, and universal ballot.[8] In accordance with the 5 May 1999 Tripartite Agreement between the UN, Indonesia, and Portugal, the vote was meant to take place in order to determine whether the people of East Timor accepted a special autonomy within Indonesia, or rejected it, which would then lead to the territory's separation. The result of the 30 August 1999 popular consultation gave a clear victory to the pro-independence advocates, with 78.5 per cent of those East Timorese who voted opting against the special autonomy proposal. This was to trigger a wave of violence and destruction directed by pro-autonomy East Timorese militias, with the full support of the Indonesian military.[9] The result was an enormous destruction of infrastructure, an estimated death toll of 1,500 people, and about 250,000 refugees, the majority of whom were forced to go to West Timor. After intense international pressure, Indonesia bowed to the inevitable. On 15 September 1999, the Security Council authorized a multinational force, INTERFET, to take all necessary measures to restore peace and security in East Timor, protect and support UNAMET in carrying out its tasks and, within force capabilities, facilitate humanitarian assistance operations. Owing above all to a substantial Australian military commitment, INTERFET was a military success.

It was within this context — the massive destruction of infrastructure, more than 250,000 refugees, a high death toll, and a political power vacuum — that UNTAET initiated its operations throughout East Timor, and started to establish the basic elements of its administrative structure. Unfortunately, however, it began on the wrong foot. In fact, "the mission suffered throughout from an underlying contradiction between its structure... and its mandate".[10] In other words, it suffered from an underlying "tension between its short-term mandate to govern East Timor and the long-term strategic objective of preparing the East Timorese for democratic self-government".[11] Jarat Chopra, former head of UNTAET's Office of District Administration, recalls that:

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> ... the planning phase in New York involved no genuine contact with, or participation by, East Timorese representatives. On 19 October 1999, Gusmão forwarded to the UN proposals for a transitional administration, outlining a Timorese role in the form of a Transitional Council. In retrospect, the CNRT's model for Timorese involvement was relatively modest, but the UN ignored it altogether. Although the organizational structure of UNTAET was shown to the CNRT, the staffing table was not, since embarrassingly it included no Timorese.[12]

UNTAET was shaped according to peacekeeping standard operational procedures, since the UN "Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), which had little experience of governance" planned it.[13] From its inception, UNTAET was "driven by the need to maintain centralized control, minimize the short-term risk of failure, and maximize short-term visible gains",[14] while at the same time there was "pressure to complete the operation as soon as possible to prevent an open-ended drain on UN finances".[15]

The UN tendency to follow a principle of impartiality, concerning relations with the local parties, also created difficulties in the political relationship with the National Council for Timorese Resistance (Conselho Nacional da Resistência Timorense, CNRT) — a coalition including, among others, the former civil war adversaries, the Timorese Democratic Union (União Democrática Timorense, UDT) and the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste Independente, FRETILIN). In fact,

> ... the impartiality principle derived from a long-established institutional perspective in the UN allowed for only two kinds of representative authorities: sovereign governments and factions. In so far as the CNRT was not a sovereign entity, it was relegated to the conceptual category of 'faction' and treated accordingly (the pro-Indonesian integrationists being another faction). That the CNRT was a distinctive creature, requiring a different approach, was not recognized.[16]

This tendency to search for impartiality was also influenced by the DPKO's security concerns, since it wished to avoid any sort of conflict with Indonesia and, therefore, considered that both the CNRT and the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor (Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor Leste, FALINTIL) should keep a low profile in the transitional governing structures. In the case of FALINTIL, UNTAET's original idea was to disband it, since it was not envisaged to be a sovereign state of East Timor with armed forces, except for security personnel associated with the police.[17] This was also CNRT's perspective, until the events in September 1999 and later incursions by the militias into East Timor, led to a reassessment.

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Regardless of those events, UNTAET kept the same view and did not allow FALINTIL to participate together with its own military component in the security patrols around the territory (even though INTERFET did benefit from their local intelligence, local knowledge, and general advice in the earlier phase). Despite FALINTIL's past role and historic legitimacy, it was placed under cantonment and conveniently sidelined until the situation started to threaten to get out of control. It was also in line with the DPKO's standard operating procedure of striving to maintain a certain level of neutrality among the players involved.[18] After all, "the advancement of particular individuals and factions through the mechanisms of participation" constituted a violation of neutrality, with uncertain repercussions.[19]

Without any equal prior example, the most similar peacekeeping operation available to follow was the UNMIK, from which the UNTAET organizational framework took significant inspiration. In fact, UNTAET was an adaptation of UNMIK to the conditions in East Timor.[20] Furthermore, Sérgio Vieira de Mello, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Transitional Administrator of East Timor, had been until then the head of UNMIK, from which he brought core personnel with him,[21] all without any specific knowledge of the territory. This was not surprising since procedures merely followed "standard UN practice" under which "the civilian administration staff [are] internationally recruited with little regard for local expertise".[22]

All the above loomed large in UNTAET's initial performance. Yet, its mandate and mindset did not forcefully seal the fate of the mission.[23] Although UNTAET was at this stage primarily a peacekeeping operation, this could have been achieved sooner if the mission had been able to react quickly to the events in the territory. After all, "with INTERFET's arrival, most of the militias had left East Timor", and this meant that "the demands of security were swiftly overtaken by the demands for political and economic development in preparation for independence".[24]

UNTAET Begins the "Timorization" of the Mission

The initial UNTAET approach to East Timorese participation was to establish a non-elected National Consultative Council (NCC) on 2 December 1999, with UNTAET and East Timorese representatives. The fifteen-member NCC was meant to "provide advice to the Transitional Administrator on all matters related to the exercise of the Transitional Administrator's executive and legislative functions", while being at the same time "the primary mechanism through which the representatives of the people of East Timor [should] actively participate

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in the decision making process".[25] The CNRT had seven seats, while the representatives of political groups outside the CNRT — in other words, the pro-integrationists — received three seats, corresponding approximately to the 21.5 per cent of their vote obtained in the 1999 popular consultation.[26] A senior officer of UNTAET explained that "the number of members was deliberately circumscribed in order to facilitate swift decision making during the emergency phase in which it was established".[27] This revealed UNTAET's perception that only with "centralized control" could there be efficiency. However, it is not totally clear why a more enlarged consultative mechanism, without substantive powers, as was the case, could constrain UNTAET's swift decision-making.

Certainly, the NCC was not what the CNRT had in mind. Earlier, in mid-September 1999, shortly after being released from prison in Indonesia, the East Timorese resistance leader José Alexandre "Xanana" Gusmão had spoken for the first time about his plans for the transitional administration. He had expected that the East Timorese would work under UN supervision and, after a short period of time, they would think about a real government.[28] The CNRT defended the principle that the participation of the East Timorese in the transition should be full and active in order for the transition to, and preparations for, independence to be positive and effective. With this aim in mind, the CNRT created the Transitional Council to work with the UN, to become the backbone of a dual political structure to implement decisions during the transitional period.[29] However, the UN ignored their aspirations. Apart from their centralizing tendency, concerns over whether to recognize the CNRT also explain this outcome. In the UN perspective, the pro-independence victory in the 1999 popular consultation was not an automatic vote for the CNRT. Therefore, an "early recognition would amount to political favoritism".[30] Furthermore, the CNRT was a coalition of different political parties without a common ideological background. This, in turn, meant that the CNRT leadership was unstable, while at the same time civil society was not yet sufficiently organized.[31]

In November and December 1999, "UNTAET was essentially an emergency humanitarian mission with almost 80 per cent of the effort... devoted to coordinating emergency food relief, basic health care and providing emergency shelter to the hundreds of thousands internally displaced persons and returning refugees".[32] Understandably, in the first months, less than 20 per cent of UNTAET's efforts was orientated towards preparing the territory for independence. However, as soon as the traditional peacekeeping functions ceased to be the main priority, while at the same time the CNRT leadership and civil society began to

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stabilize, the lack of East Timorese political participation became progressively a cause of resentment. Inevitably, this feeling was further exacerbated by the economic difficulties then felt by the population.

In his address to the first CNRT congress in August 2000, Vieira de Mello recognized that it had become clear by April that the NCC was not satisfactory as a mechanism of participation. In his words, the NCC was not "representative enough of East Timorese society, and not transparent enough in its deliberations".[33] In fact, the NCC's shortcomings were only the tip of the iceberg. Earlier, in March 2000, Jarat Chopra had resigned, arguing that the mission lacked "a judicious separation of powers and... genuine accountability to the local people whom [it] served".[34] Under pressure, in April 2000, Vieira de Mello signed an instruction establishing District Advisory Councils (DACs). The DACs were advisory bodies set up for the purpose of representing the concerns of the population and providing advice to the District Administrator in each of the thirteen districts. Again, and like the NCC, the DACs included East Timorese as well as UNTAET's representatives. Meanwhile, pressure continued to build among the East Timorese. In May, during a meeting with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, CNRT vice-president and 1996 Nobel Peace co-laureate, José Ramos Horta, "demanded the removal of all district administrators by August and their replacement with local leaders, as well as a fixed date for the UN's departure".[35]

At last, in July 2000, UNTAET took two major political decisions towards the direct participation of the East Timorese, known as "Timorization". The first concerned the National Consultative Council. By now, it was obvious that a new political institution with an enlarged membership was needed in order to be more representative and to facilitate broader participation in policy-making. Answering to this demand, UNTAET replaced the NCC with the newly created National Council, which was "composed of representatives of relevant organizations of the East Timorese civil society... as a forum for all legislative matters related to the exercise of the legislative authority of the Transitional Administrator".[36] The National Council had 33 representatives (later 36) representing a spectrum of interests: seven representatives of the CNRT and three from political parties outside it, as well as one representative from each of the thirteen districts, and one each representing students'/youth's organizations, NGO forums, women's organizations, professional associations, business organizations, the farming community, labour organizations, the Roman Catholic Church, the various Protestant Church denominations, and the Muslim community. In contrast to the NCC, the National Council

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had no non-East Timorese members. Like the NCC, the National Council was a non-elected body. Therefore, from the point of view of the East Timorese, although it was more representative and constituted an attempt to facilitate their participation, it continued to be an unsatisfactory solution.

From the East Timorese point of view, the second step was more important than the creation of the National Council. In a major departure from the initial approach, UNTAET decided to reorganize itself in order to increase East Timorese direct participation. UNTAET's pillar of Governance and Public Administration gave its place to the East Timor Transitional Administration (ETTA) administered by the members of the new Transitional Cabinet. The new — and first — Cabinet had eight (later increased to nine) ministerial portfolios: four were entrusted to the East Timorese and four to senior UNTAET staff members. As ministers, they were responsible for formulating policies and recommending regulations and directives for consideration by the National Council, while Vieira de Mello, as chair of the Cabinet, retained full responsibility in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1272. According to Ramos Horta, this restructuring met fully the expectations and concerns of the East Timorese. This was so, he argued, because at last the East Timorese became partners of UNTAET with full powers, jointly responsible for running their territory, and preparing the transition to independence.[37]

However, East Timorese satisfaction was short-lived. Xanana Gusmão soon criticized UNTAET for the slow pace of the Timorization process. International staff continued to be dominant, although there were some ministerial portfolios as well as administrative functions under East Timorese political responsibility. In December 2000, the East Timorese members of the Transitional Cabinet threatened to resign if UNTAET failed to transfer more authority to them. More than any other, this episode showed the lack of satisfaction among the East Timorese owing to the fact that Timorization was mainly cosmetic. In the end, political power continued to lie solely in UNTAET's hands. Resentment became even more significant owing to the large level of unemployment and the comparatively high living standards of UNTAET international staff. The East Timorese population — élite and masses alike — were increasingly seeing UNTAET's state-building operation as illegitimate and something far below their expectations. To the local élite, UNTAET failed to provide access to power, while to the general population it was unable to improve their daily lives. Under domestic pressure and inter-party rivalry, the East Timorese élite argued that democratic elections should take place some time in 2001.

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UNTAET's Exit Strategy and Power Hand-over

National Council member, director of the well-known East Timorese human rights NGO Yayasan HAK, and later chairman of the East Timorese Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, Aniceto Guterres Lopes, reflected the general mood. By December 2000, "he felt the UN transitional phase had been going on for too long, was neither efficient nor popular, and should be terminated quickly".[38] The general feeling of the population was that more than one year after UNTAET had started to operate, little rebuilding had occurred and no new industries had been put in place. The unemployment rate was as high as 80 per cent and the only jobs available were with UNTAET at a daily rate of US$5 for locals. Progressively, a growing consensus emerged among the East Timorese élite that they should seek independence as soon as politically and technically possible. The general feeling was that UNTAET was failing to provide acceptable governance, and in the end the population would hold them accountable for it. Therefore, on 22 February 2001, the National Council approved a set of recommendations on the political transition, put forward by the Council's Standing Committee on Political Affairs. The recommendations called for the election of an 88-member Constituent Assembly on 30 August 2001, the main aim of which was to draft the new constitution. Moreover, upon independence, the Constituent Assembly would become the new Parliament.[39]

In a sense, UNTAET had lost the upper hand, even though there was a clear understanding and expectation in the UN Security Council and the Secretariat from the very beginning that the mission would exist only for two or three years. Nevertheless, until then, UNTAET had been able to control, and to deflect, East Timorese calls for more participation in the transition. From then on, UNTAET's major concern was its exit strategy and, consequently, the state-building operation was increasingly circumscribed to the procedural transition to democracy and independence.

On 16 March 2001, the regulation for the election of the 88-member Constituent Assembly was promulgated. Since many members of the National Council were participating in the election of the Constituent Assembly, before the start of the official campaign period, UNTAET decided that the Assembly should be dissolved — an event that took place on 14 July 2001. As recommended, the election occurred on 30 August, and the Independent Electoral Commission authorized sixteen political parties to participate. According to official figures, 91.3 per cent of eligible voters cast their ballots. FRETILIN was the overall winner, with 57.3 per cent.

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After several days of political tension,[40] and against the wishes of Xanana Gusmão and Vieira de Mello, on 20 September 2001 UNTAET appointed a Cabinet controlled entirely by FRETILIN. Moreover, and equally important, FRETILIN's majority in the Constituent Assembly — in coalition with the Social Democratic Timorese Association (Associação Social Democrática Timorense, ASDT) — gave them the right to draft the constitution without the necessity of taking into account the views and interests of the other political parties. In other words, it was the Constituent Assembly, under FRETILIN control, which decided the way in which the political balance of power between the different institutions was to be divided. Since FRETILIN controlled the Constituent Assembly — and it was plausible to expect that it would not be able to control the presidency — it decided to draft a constitution similar to that of Portugal's, where executive power is exercised by the Prime Minister, and not by the President of the Republic. On 22 March 2002, after several delays, the Constituent Assembly signed into force the territory's first Constitution. The fact that seventy-two of the eighty-eight Constituent Assembly members voted in favour, and only fourteen voted against the proposed Constitution (with one abstention and one absentee), suggested a misleading sense of broad legitimacy.

From the point of view of the procedural transition to democracy, there was only one issue remaining, since in October 2001 the UN Security Council had already endorsed the proposal of the Constituent Assembly that independence should take place on 20 May 2002. This last step occurred on 14 April 2002 with the presidential election. After several months professing publicly that he had no intention of running for President of East Timor, Xanana Gusmão decided to do so. His decision was considered inevitable by some and an unexpected outcome by others. In any event, the electoral results did not catch anyone by surprise: 86.3 per cent of eligible voters participated, and 82.6 per cent of the votes were cast for Gusmão. Ironically, as will be explained below, instead of being a guarantee of political stability, it is plausible to argue that Gusmão's election will be an additional source of political conflict. How serious the political conflict will be between Gusmão and the FRETILIN Prime Minister, Marí Alkatiri, remains to be seen. Although the President's powers are mainly symbolic, according to Article 86 of the Constitution, Gusmão can dissolve Parliament and dismiss the government under certain specific circumstances.

Indeed, there seems to be significant political differences between Gusmão's and Alkatiri's views on the future of East Timor. As one newspaper editorial put it, Gusmão "wants to create a 'national unity' government that shares power with small parties" as a process intended

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to "help facilitate reconciliation and the construction of a truly national identity".[41] On the other hand, "Alkatiri and his supporters ... think the key to the future is firm, nearly one-party rule. They want a tight grip on Parliament and the cabinet and a minimum of debate, which they worry could paralyze the government".[42] As will be explained below, this stalemate was partially the result of the endorsement by UNTAET of a path leading to a FRETILIN-controlled Constituent Assembly, as well as a Constitution fully in accordance with its wishes.

UNTAET's Legacy

The UN could not have found better ground for a test case mission. Yet, it cannot be said that the results of the experiment were fully satisfactory, since the evidence is mixed. Despite the enormous challenges and budget limitations, the process of transition should have accomplished more than it did. Thus, the declaration of East Timor's independence on 20 May 2002 did not mean that UNTAET had fulfilled entirely the objectives originally identified by Security Council Resolution 1272.

Although UNTAET provided security and maintained law and order, established an administration, assisted in the development of civil and social services, ensured the co-ordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development assistance, supported capacity-building for self-government, and assisted in the establishment of conditions for sustainable development, much more, earlier and better, could have been done, especially in the development of civil and social services, the support of capacity-building for self-government, as well as the establishment of conditions for sustainable development.

In the first months, and despite significant logistical difficulties, UNTAET did ensure successfully the co-ordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance. This was one of the classic components of peacekeeping missions. The other was to provide security, and UNTAET left East Timor with a much more stable environment, even though the laurels must be shared with INTERFET. Still, when UNTAET was established its external security and territorial integrity continued to be a great cause of concern, owing to the destabilizing raids across the frontier from West Timor by members of the former pro-autonomy militia gangs. Despite the stable security environment, it is possible that hard-line militia might continue to be a threat to the new sovereign state in the future.[43] Indeed, the continuing need in East Timor for public administration, law and order, and external security, led the UN to create a post-independence UN Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET).

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Vieira de Mello himself recognized that UNTAET was "not able to complete the tasks ... set by the UN Security Council".[44] In other words, much more should have been done. The fact that it did not do so was a direct consequence of the UN centralizing tendency and later Timorization, but also of UNTAET's lack of political legitimacy to push forward with essential decisions.

While UNTAET did impose the primacy of law, it did not provide a perception that justice was done concerning the human rights violations committed during 1999. Justice is always a prominent issue in the political agenda of transitions to democracy, especially if the human rights violations are a vivid memory, as is the case of East Timor. UNTAET left the territory with few experienced and trained East Timorese judges, public defenders, and prosecutors, as well as limited support services for the courts.

UNTAET's underachievement as far as justice is concerned resulted also from Indonesian obstruction, particularly concerning the serious crimes committed in the territory. Indonesian military personnel and the East Timorese leaders of the militia gangs responsible for the wave of violence in September 1999 left the territory prior to the arrival of INTERFET and UNTAET. As a consequence, they were inaccessible to UNTAET's law-enforcement agencies. Therefore, the fulfilment of justice for the events in East Timor was dependent on Indonesia, which since then has been moving towards that goal at a mere snail's pace.[45]

Justice concerning minor crimes was also not done. Confronted with a heavy workload of minor crimes, UNTAET had no other alternative but to consider an amnesty within the context of the East Timorese Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation (CRTR). Furthermore, intra-Timorese reconciliation is also a prominent unsolved issue that UNTAET left as a legacy to the forthcoming political agenda of the territory. Using the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a role model, East Timor set up the CRTR, which is only now undertaking its initial work.[46] The idea of establishing the CRTR will turn out to be, in the end, mere wishful thinking. East Timor does not have the necessary critical mass, a developed civil society, and a strong independent media — all of which are fundamental to the success of any truth and reconciliation commission. Moreover, after the unequivocal victory of the independence supporters in the 1999 popular consultation, the domestic balance of power that later emerged left little space for compromise concerning those responsible for serious crimes. Bearing in mind that some within the East Timorese élite have doubts about its usefulness, it is likely that the CRTR will soon become a target of criticism.

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East Timor will also have to complete the return of refugees from West Timor. In two and half years, UNTAET was unable to complete it, and there are still tens of thousands of refugees remaining on the other side of the border. The East Timorese political authorities will have to continue to encourage, monitor, and protect their return, while at the same time making the necessary efforts to convince the population to cease harassing those suspected of involvement with former pro-autonomy militia gangs and political groups.

On the other hand, UNTAET did not deal with the future of FALINTIL until this issue became unavoidable. In fact, UNTAET did not know what to do with FALINTIL.[47] Only in March 2000, when the lack of discipline within FALINTIL was already a potential security challenge did UNTAET, at last, form a study group to deal with their future. UNTAET took until June 2000 to order a study to evaluate East Timorese needs in terms of security and defence,[48] and only in September 2000 did it decide to establish the East Timor Defence Force (ETDF). In November 2000, Australia and Portugal took responsibility for the initial training and equipment of the ETDF.

On 31 January 2001, UNTAET issued regulations authorizing the establishment of the ETDF. This was particularly significant because never before had the UN been "involved in the development of a nation's defence force".[49] However, Australia and Portugal took responsibility for training and equipping only one infantry battalion until the territory's independence. As a consequence of UNTAET's failure to address this issue earlier, although it is planned that the ETDF will consist of a light infantry force of 1,500 regulars, about two-thirds of the personnel have still to be recruited and trained.

UNTAET was also responsible for maintaining law and order. As mentioned earlier, UNTAET did not envisage that the sovereign state of East Timor would possess armed forces. In the initial conception, there would be only security personnel associated with the police, like the French *gendarmerie*. Therefore, "recruitment plans were set for a force of 3,000 police officers and a Police College was established early in 2000 to provide rapid three-month training to cohorts (initially 50 at a time)".[50] By June 2000, the first East Timor Police Service (ETPS) officers had graduated and by September 2001, there were already more than 1,000 local personnel. However, the projected numbers were not met by the time of independence, and it is questionable whether such a number continues to make sense with the existence of the ETDF.

Moreover, there is a low crime rate in the territory, which might have contributed to the apparent low priority constraining the development and strengthening of the ETPS. In fact, UNTAET left the

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ETPS with the problem of a serious lack of resources. Bearing in mind that the crime rate is low but the prisoner population has been increasing, the new sovereign state will have to immediately provide reasonable funds to allow the ETPS to achieve a better operational level.

The territory's peaceful transition to democracy was seen as a great achievement. Indeed, it was a remarkable success. Under UNTAET's supervision, the East Timorese elected peacefully a Constituent Assembly in 2001, drafted a Constitution, and elected a President in April 2002. Yet, the potential for political (and perhaps violent) conflict remains beneath the surface. It is an open secret that Prime Minister Alkatiri and President Gusmão have serious personal and political differences. The fact that the Constitution was drafted by FRETILIN alone means that sooner or later the document's legitimacy will be questioned. It is reasonable to argue that a better constitution-making process would have been a non-elected Constitutional Commission, with broad representation and including non-party people, to draw up a constitution with broad legitimacy, to be ratified later in a referendum. Alternatively, if there was not enough time before independence, there could have been an interim constitution. This would have avoided the unwelcome transformation of the Constituent Assembly into the first Parliament without fresh elections.[51]

The popular embrace of the democratic act of electing their own representatives took place with enormous hopes for better living standards. UNTAET did not bring this about. First, the complex negotiating process with Australia concerning the oil and gas fields in the shared Timor Sea inevitably took time. Moreover, additional negotiations with the oil and gas companies involved meant that, in the short term, the territory will continue not to profit from these natural resources. Furthermore, economic investment in the territory continues to be severely blocked owing to the failure in solving the lack of land and property records, destroyed during the riots in September 1999. UNTAET and the East Timorese must share the blame in this matter. As early as April 2000, if not before, Vieira de Mello was fully aware that land acquisition was a nightmare since nobody knew who owned what and where, and this situation was creating additional difficulties in attracting foreign investment.[52] Implicit was the idea that the sooner there was certainty over land and property, the sooner there would be economic stability and the opportunity for job creation. Without clear ownership laws, investors would be reluctant to put money in long-term projects. Vieira de Mello knew this and he himself made reference to this problem more than once. "Who is going to invest in East Timor if we are unable to provide them with guarantees that the land on which they will be establishing their head office or their business is

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theirs, or can be leased to them for an acceptable period of time", Vieira de Mello stated in July 2000.[53]

Facing contradictory Portuguese and Indonesian land titles,[54] UNTAET's Land and Property Unit tried to quickly resolve the problem. Inevitably, its efforts seemed to have clashed with local interests, namely, the Carrascalão family. In December 2000, among other things, resignation threats by the four East Timorese members of the Transitional Cabinet were also motivated by complaints that UNTAET was only taking into account property deeds dated after Indonesian occupation, and not those from the Portuguese colonial era. Since the Carrascalão family amassed considerable land and property holdings under the Portuguese administration, such a move potentially threatened their interests. East Timorese journalists claimed at the time that "the resignation threats were orchestrated by ... João Carrascalão, who [had] told Radio UNTAET recently he would quit [the Transitional Cabinet] if responsibility for the key Land and Property Unit ... was not transferred to his own portfolio".[55] A few days later, the Transitional Cabinet passed a resolution bringing UNTAET's Land and Property Unit under the control of João Carrascalão and, later on, it was decided that only after the territory's independence would it seek a solution.

In short, as far as land and property records were concerned, UNTAET failed to show the will to resolve the issue, while at the same time East Timorese leaders themselves contributed significantly to the lack of a solution. In consequence, the newly sovereign East Timorese government will have to solve this problem as soon as possible, in order to create conducive conditions for foreign investment. If the democratic regime does not bring economic prosperity in the years ahead, it is likely that the legitimacy of democracy will quickly erode. Economic development feeds into, and depends upon, political stability. In order to achieve the latter, East Timor will have to keep searching for its place within Southeast Asia and the world. Multilaterally, East Timor is now seeking formal observer status in ASEAN, despite Myanmar's declared opposition. Bilaterally, in the near future, Australia, Indonesia, and Portugal will be its three most important relationships, while the United States and Japan will also loom large. Understandably, the relationship with Indonesia is, and will continue to be, a cause of much irritation.

UNTAET's Lessons

Although bearing in mind that "East Timor's situation [was] so unique that the lessons to be learnt from it may in fact be quite limited", it is nevertheless possible to reach some preliminary conclusions.[56] It can

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be argued that there were two main types of difficulties for UNTAET. One problem was inefficiency. As was mentioned earlier, because of UNTAET's inadequate planning methods, procedures, and assumptions, its mission began on the wrong foot. Thus, once some corrections were made, UNTAET's efficiency increased. Moreover, UNTAET could have been more efficient if it had the staff with the skills required as well as the necessary resources. The obvious conclusion is that, in the future, the UN must rethink its planning methods, procedures, and assumptions, and provide their missions the required staff and resources.

The other problem was the difficulty in establishing an acceptable level of accountability. As Richard Caplan has pointed out:

> ... transitional administrators [TAs], and their staff, serve at the pleasure of these bodies [in this case the UN], and it is to them that TAs report and are answerable. While local parties may also have to account to international bodies ... those bodies are not themselves accountable to the local population in any direct way.[57]

UNTAET tried to resolve this issue by shifting to a model of co-government, but in the end it only found an interim solution. In turn, this is related to the issue of legitimacy. The UN state-building missions have legal legitimacy as a result of UN Security Council resolutions that support them. Obviously, legal legitimacy is totally different from political legitimacy, which under normal circumstances is acquired by democratic elections.

Since UN state-building missions do not submit themselves to the test of democratic elections in order to obtain political legitimacy, UNTAET's experience suggests that, while it is feasible to fully overcome the first problem, it is only possible to attenuate the second. This lesson poses the question whether it is appropriate for the UN to engage in such operations in the first place.

Most of the earlier studies evaluating UNTAET's rule did not focus on the legitimacy issue. Some concentrated on what went wrong in order to suggest improvements concerning efficiency in future similar situations. This approach disregards the central role of accountability and legitimacy in the overall success or failure of UN state-building operations. Yet, accountability and legitimacy constrain efficiency. Therefore, in the long term, if the absence of accountability and political legitimacy is not solved, neither will be the issue of efficiency. It can be argued that the contrary perception is an illusion.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that future UN state-building missions should not try to improve their efficiency. Indeed, if other similar missions take place in the future, many of the lessons suggested elsewhere might seem reasonable and necessary, although sometimes

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they appear contradictory and irreconcilable. What this article, and this section in particular, wishes to emphasize is that none of the practical improvements suggested thus far to diminish inefficient planning methods, procedures, and assumptions will solve the lack of accountability and political legitimacy.

For example, Astri Suhrke has suggested that future state-building missions should be split or de-aggregated, with one structure for relief and peacekeeping, and another for governance, when in fact the current trend is in the opposite direction, towards integrated missions.[58] "How the two would relate to each other" is a question that she also raises without giving an answer.[59] Still, and up to a certain point, this can contribute to increased efficiency, although whether UN state-building missions are integrated or de-aggregated is irrelevant when considering the lack of accountability and political legitimacy.

Joel Beauvais has pointed out that "the use of the advisory council model is appropriate only for the very short-term 'emergency' phase following post-conflict intervention", and that an "early transition to a broader and deeper form of participation, such as UNTAET's model of 'co-government' is strongly recommended".[60] However, he has also pointed out, to the contrary, that "admittedly, the co-government model does not overcome fully the fundamental problems with non-elected consultative bodies", although he considers it the "best balance possible".[61]

Another researcher, Boris Kondoch, has concluded that "the local population should be consulted from the beginning. [...] Less power should be vested in the hands of a transitional administrator and a more sophisticated system of checks and balances must be installed."[62] Yet, although Kondoch has emphasized the fact that the deficit of accountability constitutes a problem, he does not explain how a different system of checks and balances would overcome the lack of political legitimacy.

Concerning efficiency, one lesson that Jarat Chopra learned was that "perhaps coalition missions led by single countries may be more effective for temporary government", even though he admits that they are likely to be "criticized as vehicles for individual nations seeking regional hegemony".[63] As far as the deficit of accountability is concerned, Kondoch thinks that it would have been solved if UNTAET had made efforts to prepare the East Timorese "by example as well as by prescription, for sound representational government".[64] Certainly, this could have appeased the East Timorese. However, in the long term, it would not have solved the lack of political legitimacy.

Simon Chesterman does not ignore the fact that "UNTAET can hardly lay claim to democratic legitimacy. Neither he [Vieira de Mello]

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nor his staff are accountable in any direct way to the [East] Timorese population."[65] Still, he was more concerned with efficiency than with legitimacy in his work. Therefore, bearing in mind efficiency, Chesterman suggests that UN state-building operations should have a clear political endpoint, time to plan, and a flexible mandate.[66]

International transitional administrations are embedded in a paradox. On the one hand, they have enormous influence concerning the political decisions to be taken during the transition to democracy and/or independence. Indeed, they might exert strong influence concerning the future constitutional framework and political system, the treatment of past human rights violations, the nature of the economy, the role of the bureaucracy, the shape of the armed forces, and the state's future international place and alliances in the international system.[67] However, on the other hand, their lack of a democratic mandate until free and contested elections are held and a popularly mandated government assumes power, constrains significantly their political power. In fact, "their lack of legitimacy is inherent in their self-labelling as 'provisional' or 'interim' which indicates their realization that their authority is transitional".[68]

This lack of political legitimacy — felt also by domestic interim governments — owing to two reasons, is even worse in the case of international transitional administrations. First, they usually include a significant number of foreigners in senior political positions. As such, they tend to be seen with suspicion by the local élite and masses alike, and as unrepresentative of national interests. Second, and more importantly, contrary to domestic interim governments, they will not have the opportunity to be legitimized later on by democratic elections. They are, from start to end, undemocratic in their nature and there is very little to overcome it.

Although they can diminish their foreign composition, namely, by including as many local citizens as possible in senior political positions, international transitional administrations find it difficult to overcome their inherent undemocratic nature. Transitional administrations are embedded in a no-win situation. Whatever they do to be accepted, from the point of view of the local population, it will never be enough. This highlights the dilemma that will always confront similar UN state-building operations.

In turn, this fact raises the question of whether it is appropriate for the UN to engage in such operations in the first place. As the Brahimi Report has pointed out, transitional civil administrations face unique challenges and responsibilities, which lead to the "question of whether the United Nations should be in this business at all".[69] Jarat Chopra also raises this issue when he says that the UN may be "ill-suited to

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administering territories in transition".[70] In other words, Chopra doubts whether the UN is sufficiently flexible to exercise civilian governance. The argument developed here seems to suggest that the UN should not be in this business at all, if the legacy and the lessons of UNTAET are taken into account, and the inherent conceptual dilemmas behind it, as well as the "ambivalence about civil administration among United Nations member states and within the Secretariat".[71]

Therefore, and admitting that UN state-building missions might be in exceptional cases unavoidable, the UN should adopt a minimalist approach with clear limits concerning their duration and scope. Concerning duration, UN state-building missions should be as small as possible, and a timetable should be put in place from day one, with clear temporal deadlines for specific steps, as well as a defined expiration date.

Concerning scope, their main aim should be to guarantee a successful procedural transition to democracy and/or independence. Any other goals, such as institution-building, rehabilitation, recovery, and reconstruction should be left to other international actors in tandem with the local population. Much of UNTAET's work might have been better sub-contracted to organizations and NGOs that really want to undertake such tasks. As it has often been observed, UN personnel are there for political reasons and not primarily because of their motivation or expertise.

Conclusion

An academic researcher has pointed out that:

> ... the complex and large-scale governance functions assumed by the UN in Kosovo and East Timor raise important policy questions about the capacity of the UN to perform such functions in territories severely affected by conflict. In weighing such questions, much will depend on whether the UN is judged to have succeeded or failed in the task of guiding post-conflict societies towards political stability, economic recovery, and reconciliation.[72]

This is certainly true, although probably not the most relevant issue that will determine whether similar UN state-building operations will take place in the future. In fact, this emphasis on performance evaluations neglects the interests at play concerning the ambivalence about civil administration, especially among UN Security Council permanent members. Indeed, the United States was the country that most supported UNTAET's commitment towards an endpoint. Owing to the enormous financial costs that UN state-building missions imply,

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the United States in particular, as the most important contributor to the UN regular budget, will not be favourably disposed to similar operations in the future, no matter how imperative the arguments might be.

The first hint that this might be the case was the Bonn Intra-Afghan Agreement on 5 December 2001, when the task of rehabilitating, recovering, and reconstructing Afghanistan was put under the authority of the Afghan Interim Authority, and not the responsibility of a UN transitional administration. Indeed, UN Security Council Resolution 1383 merely limited itself to endorsing the Bonn conclusions. If evidence was required, it appeared that the UN Security Council ignored the comments made by Vieira de Mello and World Bank President James Wolfensohn that East Timor could be a model for a new interim administration in Afghanistan.[73] In fact, Afghanistan does not fit exactly the situation of East Timor, as conceptually envisaged earlier. Yet, compared with East Timor or Kosovo, it certainly was taken into account that Afghanistan is a territory much bigger in geographical size and population. The UN mission in the tiny territory of East Timor involved economic costs as high as about US$500 million a day. Therefore, it is not difficult to foresee that a similar UN mission in Afghanistan would incur much higher costs.

It is plausible that in the future the United States will support the view "that training and institution-building belong[s] bureaucratically to the world of development", as it initially did concerning East Timor.[74] For the wrong reasons, the United States favours probably the best option. Again, Afghanistan seems to confirm this trend. In the years ahead, the territory will become the responsibility of all organizations responsible for development, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Health Organization (WHO) and many others. According to a preliminary assessment prepared jointly by the UN Development Programme, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction is expected to cost about US$15 billion over the next decade.

Last but not least, the likelihood that state-building missions such as UNTAET will be necessary more often in the future relies on the assumption that many other sovereign states, so-called failed states, will disintegrate in the post-Cold War era.[75] As time goes on and the post-Cold War system begins to stabilize, it is also possible to argue that the contrary could occur. In fact, the unique conditions that were behind UNTAET, as it happened with INTERFET, allowed an exceptional experience that was "against the grain".[76] Rather than being an example of how future similar UN state-building operations will be like, owing to the reasons mentioned above, it is possible that, in a few

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years, UNTAET will constitute a case study concerning a historic anomaly in the manuals of past UN peacekeeping operations.

Interestingly, East Timor — after being a laboratory for a UN state-building mission — is about to become a test case once again, this time concerning Japan's political willingness to play an increasing role both in Asia's regional security and on the international political stage.[77]

NOTES

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The Politics of Market Liberalization: A Comparative Study of the South Korean and Philippine Telecommunications Service Industries

DONG-YEOB KIM

The market liberalization of the South Korean and Philippine telecommunications sectors were effected largely as a result of the shift in the international political economic paradigm towards neo-liberalism. The nature and content of the two countries' market liberalization differed according to the domestic power structure involving the political players. Although democratization and globalization pushed the state to liberalize the industry, there were certain lingering expectations of the state to engage in the market. The role of the state is to make the liberalized market work properly and to protect people from arbitrary business behaviour. The state is obliged to create optimum conditions to develop the national economy and to increase people's welfare. The state is also expected to improve its own domestic industry in line with global competition.

Introduction

A large number of studies have examined the East Asian "developmental state" model,[1] in which the state is said to maintain its autonomy and strength, or capacity to implement effective economic policies. This thesis has, however, been challenged by other competing schools of thought. Some scholars have found that changes in the domestic power structure contradict the thesis.[2] The state's monopoly in economic policy-making in many developing countries has been eroded in the

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course of economic development. The conception of the state as the engine of growth has been gradually fading away. The business sector has been finding its own way of doing business outside state protection and support.

The wave of democratization stimulated the suppressed demands of populations in developing countries.[3] Economic development has not distributed benefits equally to people at large. The labour sector, whose contribution to development was immense, received a disproportionately lesser share of the benefits. The strategic coalition[4] between the state and the business sector has monopolized the fruits of economic development, and has largely ignored the distribution of social wealth. Ideological and moral support from domestic and international society has, however, enabled the labour sector to become one of the influential political players in state policy formulation. Furthermore, the market guided by the state has frequently distorted the price system, favouring selected beneficiaries from the business sector at the expense of consumers. However, growing average educational levels have raised the social consciousness of the general population. People are no longer ignorant and tolerant of the trampling of their rights. They have learned how to organize themselves, such as in consumer associations, and to impose group pressure on entities/institutions that affect their lives.

Under the pressures of democratization, state autonomy in economic policy-making has been questioned in many developing as well as newly developed countries.[5] Without proper consultation and consensus from the private sector, policy formulation and implementation have become increasingly difficult. On the other hand, the strong international trend towards neo-liberalism has affected a restructuring of the global economic landscape. The strong advocates of this ideology, particularly the United States, have pressured other states to adjust themselves to the new trends by adopting this ideology in their domestic and foreign policy frameworks. Many countries, whose economic backbones are mainly dependent upon the international market, have little choice but to follow the global trend. As Stephan Haggard has put it,[6] the appropriate economic function of government has become linked to the prevalence of liberal economic ideas in the international system. Thus, governments have tended to retrench interventionist economic policies and allow market forces to have greater economic sovereignty.

Under such domestic and international pressures, the state in some developing countries has been pressured to open up its monopolized sectors of industry and privatize government-owned enterprises. This trend may be interpreted as either one step forward towards economic development or as a means of getting out of an economic

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deadlock.[7] Whatever the interpretation, many developing countries face the irresistible long-term trend of market liberalization. Liberalization refers to the removal of entry barriers to a previously monopoly market situation. However, liberalization is only a necessary condition for market competition since non-structural barriers, such as the lack of sufficient market size and the hostility of incumbent market players, discourage potential entrants. It is one reason why the role of the state is a critical factor in bringing out the meaningful results of market liberalization.

The telecommunications service industry was considered a naturally monopolized industry for reasons of social service and the huge amount of infrastructural investment needed such that states were the only possible entities that could afford the big capitalization. Until the early 1990s, South Korea and the Philippines monopolized the telecommunications service industry, although the placement of ownership differed. In the case of Korea, competition among several private corporations characterized the state of affairs in the manufacturing sector of the telecommunications industry. However, the state-owned company monopolized the industry. As a result, market liberalization came together with the privatization of the state-owned company. In the case of the Philippines, a private company monopolized the service sector of the telecommunications industry. The manufacturing sector was chiefly dependent on foreign supply. Market liberalization for the Philippines simply meant the elimination of entry barriers to the services sector of the industry.

The significance of the telecommunications industry in the current period cannot be overemphasized. The information society is no longer a concept, discussed among a limited group of people. Information technology and its infrastructure are in every corner of society, and entire populations engage in using them directly or indirectly. Advanced telecommunications facilities have become a necessary condition to facilitate economic growth. Once considered a utility only, telecommunications has now been cast as a major profit centre. Samarajiva and Goddard's have commented that "what were once plain old voice networks are now seen as the central conduits of the information society, analogous to the canals and railways of the industrial society".[8]

The rapid changes in the global economic environment affect the economic policies of individual states, and the ability of national governments to come up with an appropriate policy direction, and a strong will to implement is always under question. Social and economic groups differ in interpreting the changes in global politics, and this causes ruptures and tensions in the socio-economic system. There are several important factors and groups to consider in any analysis of the

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relationship between political factors and the telecommunications industry.

The nature of the telecommunications industry makes it a global issue as to how countries with wholly different policies *vis-à-vis* trade and investment will cope with the policy homogeneity necessary for the efficient operation of telecommunications providers. The regulatory changes at the international level have fundamentally influenced the ongoing industrial restructuring in the telecommunications sector globally. In addition, a number of global telecommunications companies are vigorously purchasing foreign telecommunications assets and interests through foreign direct investment and joint ventures. The circumstances are like that of a jungle, which makes it interesting and also important to examine the state's initiatives in strategic policies and countermeasures against external challenges to be able to survive and strengthen the domestic telecommunications industry. Looking at the dynamics among domestic political players in policy formulation and implementation is important to understand the changes in the telecommunications industry.

In this article, the market liberalization processes occurring in the telecommunications service industries of South Korea and the Philippines are examined. The focus is on the role of the state in projecting the vision, and meeting the objectives, of liberalization policy in the context of the dynamic interactions among players both in the domestic and international arenas. The following questions are addressed:

- To what extent and pace did market liberalization in the telecommunications service industry occur in South Korea and the Philippines?
- What roles did the state, the business sector, the social sector, and the external factors play in the process of market liberalization in South Korea and the Philippines? What were the factors and the political dynamics between and among the players?
- What are the anticipated consequences of market liberalization in South Korea and the Philippines? How do these differ from the intended results?
- What changes in the role of the state need to take place for market liberalization to achieve its intended results?

The study identifies three broadly divided domestic political players and external factors that have directly or indirectly influenced the telecommunications industry. The three interact with each other and their behaviour is determined by the political power structure. The state is placed at the centre of those relationships. *Vis-à-vis* the business

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sector, the state exerts a strong influence by dispensing several kinds of benefits created by government economic policies, this being a common practice in developing countries. In return, the business sector, on one hand, follows government policy and implements the state's development strategy, providing political support to the regime. The patron–client relationship changes in line with socio-political development. The relationship between the state and the social sector has usually been demonstrated in the form of state suppression of this sector in many developing countries. However, the power leverage of these two players has been changing according to the development of democratic norms in society.

The relationship between the business and social sector has been determined mainly by state industrial policy. When the state commits a developmental alliance with the business sector, the social sector is to a large extent alienated from the sharing of the economic profits. However, with the new economic environment and democratization, unequal relations have been transformed into relations of equal partnership. The new environment and the emergence of new political alliances have changed the power structure of these three players.

External factors exert strong influence on individual states, especially developing countries, in economic policy formulation and implementation. The influential countries in a certain industry play the pivotal role in changing international trends. However, most of the developing countries have insignificant influence in changing these trends. External factors, being influential on a country's business and social sectors, can weaken or strengthen any sector of society. As a result, massive protests against external influence come into the open so that the state frequently encounters difficulties in complying with international trends. The complexity of interaction among the political players can be simplified, as shown in Figure 1.

The basic analytical framework of this study is that of the comparative method.[9] The differences during the periods covered in each country and the differences found therein are analysed. The study is an explanatory as well as a qualitative research effort, and the analysis is at the national level. The systematic understanding of changes in the power structure, key institutional arrangements, and structural characteristics of the state and political regime which shape the overall policy-making process can best be illustrated at the national level.

This study comprises five sections. As seen above, the introductory section sets out the study's methodology. The second section discusses the historical background of the South Korean and Philippine political economies. It contextualizes the market liberalization that has occurred in the Korean and Philippine telecommunications service industries in

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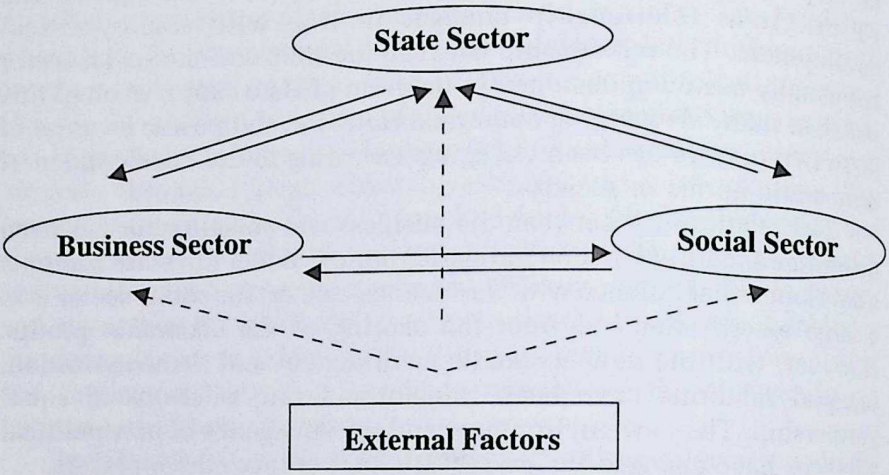
FIGURE 1
Conceptual Framework of the Study: The Power Relations among the Political Players



the 1990s. The third section discusses the market evolution of the two countries' telecommunications service industries, elaborating on the trajectories of market liberalization in the two countries. The fourth section discusses the political dynamics among the three internal players and the external factors with respect to the liberalization of the telecommunications service market that occurred in the 1990s in both countries. The last section, apart from serving as a conclusion, proposes some recommendations.

Historical Background of the South Korean and Philippine Political Economies

In the early 1950s, the economic status of the two countries under study was not much different from each other, although the Philippines was in a better position than South Korea. However, the past half-century created an enormous disparity between the two countries, as highlighted in Figure 2. The disparity in GNI/GDP[10] per capita explicitly demonstrated the differences in economic performance between the two countries.

The two countries have gone through different experiences in the state–private sector relationship. South Korea has maintained a relatively

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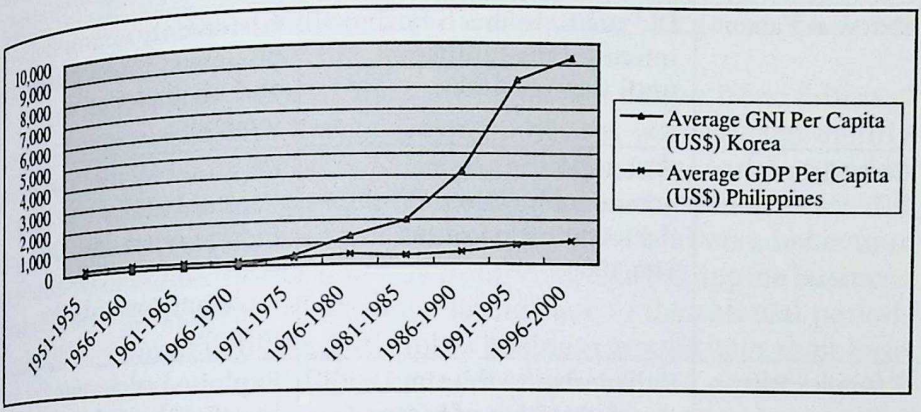
FIGURE 2

Historical Economic Performance: Korea and the Philippines



strong and autonomous state during the period of fast economic growth. On the other hand, the Philippines has maintained a weak state and strong traditional élite groups which have held the state captive. As a result, the Philippine state could not implement effective economic policies; rather, it mainly facilitated or incorporated the interests of the dominant classes. Table 1 provides a comparative perspective on the characteristics of the political players in the Philippines and South Korea.

A number of explanations can be advanced for the growth and persistence of the different characteristics of the state in the two countries. South Korea represents a type of country which has persistently lived under external threat from the North. The hardship of survival as a political entity shaped a strong tendency among South Koreans to unite in countering external threats. The cultural heritage of Confucianism placed state authority at the highest position within which individuals' rights could be sacrificed.[11]

The Philippines has a different historical background. The long period of Spanish colonization spawned an image of a central authority as suppressive and exploitative, which in consequence alienated the people. The localized Catholicism made people submissive and less motivated to change.[12] However, since culture and social norms are not unchangeable, the characteristics of the state could change according to the leader's governing skills and the existing situation. Under the Kim Dae-jung administration in South Korea and the Fidel Ramos administration in the Philippines, both countries experienced a period of state stability and positive socio-economic prospects.

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TABLE 1
Characteristics of Political Players in South Korea and the Philippines

	Korea	*Philippines*
External Factors	Did not have much business interest, thus indifferent until the mid-1980s.	Historically strong and possessed direct influence and an exploitative tendency.
State Sector	Historically strong and autonomous state until the democratization of the late 1980s	Captured by traditional landlord élites. Incorporated with the élites and predatory tendency towards the masses.
Business Sector	Submissive to the state with the expectation of rents. Became strong enough to claim equal partnership since the 1980s.	Exploited economic benefits through political connections. Maintained strong political power.
Social Sector	Long time ignored and depressed, thus became aggressive and consolidated. Began to mobilize its potential during the 1990s.	Traditionally vibrant and aggressive but fragmented, thus easily manipulated and abused by dominant groups.

External factors have significantly influenced the internal power balance of the two countries. However, South Korea and the Philippines have employed different techniques in handling external factors. The strong state of Korea has effectively utilized external factors as a resource to strengthen itself and as leverage to control the private sector. When external factors tended to weaken the state in the domestic power structure, the Korean state found an effective way to maintain its superiority *vis-à-vis* the private sector. Only when other domestic sectors grew strong enough to seek democratic norms did the state begin to nurture a new way of governance. The Philippine state could not manage the external factors for its own interests; rather, it was a captive pulled at will by external forces. The private sector, especially traditional élite groups, utilized external factors to pursue its own personal interests.

External forces handled situations in different ways in the two countries. Being a country largely lacking natural resources and the possibility of conflict breaking out with the North, South Korea has not

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been an attractive place for economic exploitation through long-term and direct investments. In contrast, the Philippines' geopolitical situation is less disadvantageous and, in comparison, it has rich natural resources. Furthermore, its Westernized culture and consumption patterns have provided favourable conditions for maintaining long-term business interests.

The business sectors of the two countries derive from different social backgrounds. The Korean business classes were created mainly by the state with its favourable policies right after independence and in the course of economic growth. Since the Korean business sector did not have other credible resources to rely on, its submissive behaviour towards state authority was one way to survive. The Philippine business classes have had its historical roots dating back to the colonial period. A significant number of the Philippine business groups have their base on inherited haciendas.[13] Effective control of national politics by the landed classes after independence diminished the country's potential for economic growth. Since Adam Smith, the landlord classes have been identified as stagnant feudal elements. The success and failure of land reforms provided the single significant factor that influenced the modern histories of the two countries.

The social sectors of South Korea and the Philippines had effectively been suppressed by the dominant sectors for a long time. The course of struggle by the social sectors have had similarities in both countries, but differences in maturity have existed. The Korean social sector was able to achieve strong status in national politics based on the articulation and consolidation of its movements. Since the majority of the South Korean population belonged to the middle classes, with high levels of education and economic stability, the sector accumulated power as the largest constituency and became a strong power centre in national politics.[14] On the other hand, the power of the Philippine social sector is rather spontaneous and temporary, exhibiting power only during certain periods.

It is also noticeable that there were differences in people's attitudes towards a public servant's wrong-doings. Koreans traditionally value loyalty and honesty, especially among public servants. Once the people's trust is betrayed, the one who has betrayed that trust is not easily forgotten nor forgiven. On the other hand, Filipinos easily forget, and forgive those who have done wrong. As a result, the Philippines' social oligarchies are prone to corruption and their privileges are easily maintained.

As shown in the timeline of the two countries' political economic history in Table 2, the political power balance in South Korea has evolved slowly but distinctly towards equality among the three domestic

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sectors — state, business, and social. In the case of the Philippines, not much difference was made in the political power structures throughout the second half of the last century. Several attempts and opportunities have been given to the Philippine state or the social sector, but these were not effectively capitalized, because of the failure to change the socio-economic structure of the country in which the vested interests of landed oligarchies and foreign capitalists are the only ones that have

TABLE 2

Perodical Changes of the Economic Policies and Political Players' Status in South Korea and the Philippines

	Economic Policy	*External Factors*	*State Sector*	*Business Sector*	*Social Sector*
Korea					
1954–61	Semi Democratic ISI[a]	Strong, Support	Strong, Influential	Weak, Beneficiary	Weak, Depressed
1962–72	Authoritarian EOI[b]	Weak, Support	Strong, Influential	Weak, Beneficiary	Weak, Depressed
1973–79	Authoritarian ISI	Weak, Support	Strong, Influential	Weak, Beneficiary	Weak, Depressed
1980–87	Semi Authoritarian Liberalism	Temporary S[c], Support	Temporary S, Influential	Temporary S, Influential	Weak, Aggressive
1988–2000	Democratic Liberalism	Temporary S, Support	Temporary S, Influential	Temporary S, Influential	Temporary S, Influential
Philippines					
1946–49	Democratic Liberalism	Strong, Support	Weak, Influential	Strong, Influential	Weak, Aggressive
1950–61	Democratic ISI	Temporary S, Support	Temporary S, Influential	Strong, Influential	Weak, Depressed
1962–72	Democratic Liberalism	Strong, Support	Weak, Influential	Strong, Influential	Weak, Depressed
1973–85	Authoritarian Liberalism	Strong, Support	Temporary S, Influential	Strong, Influential	Weak, Aggressive
1986–2000	Democratic Liberalism	Strong, Support	Temporary S, Influential	Strong, Influential	Temporary S, Influential

[a] Import-substitution Industrialization.
[b] Export-oriented Industrialization.
[c] Temporarily Strong.

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prevailed and have mattered at the expense of the other sectors in society.[15]

Trajectories of Market Liberalization in the South Korean and Philippine Telecommunications Service Industries

Contemporary society is characterized by an unprecedented explosion in knowledge and information. It is truly an information society where knowledge and information count among the key sources of power. It differs from an industrialized society in which infrastructure, such as roads, railways, port, and airlines, play important roles in the development of industry. In an information society, the infrastructure relied on, to a large extent, are the advanced communication networks and facilities that constitute the telecommunications industry. Indeed, telecommunications services not only facilitate interpersonal or inter-country communications, they also serve as a medium or catalyst which contributes to the enhancement of productivity in the various industries of a country, in particular, and its economy, in general. Many countries have identified and pinned their hopes on the telecommunications industry as a major source of revenue and job creation.

Technological evolution in the telecommunications industry has facilitated and accelerated changes in society. This is indicated in the paradigm shift the telecommunications service industry has experienced. The conventional market for telecommunications services used to be voice delivery with line-networks until only some years ago. However, the rapid expansion of wireless telecommunications and the number of Internet users have restructured the entire market. Wireless telephone subscribers have already outnumbered landline subscribers in many countries, and data communication via the Internet has increased dramatically. Service demands, in turn, have further accelerated technological development in this area, and such development has also created new demands based on endless possibilities, which further push back the frontiers of technological evolution.

The Korean Case of Market Liberalization in the Telecoms Industry

Before the series of market reforms, the state-owned enterprise, Korea Telecommunications Authority (KTA),[16] virtually monopolized the entire voice-phone service market in South Korea. Voice-phone was then the only service used widely in the telecommunications service market in the country. In 1989, South Korea finally engaged in market liberalization by amending the Telecommunications Business Law. The amendment dictated the privatization of KTA, which changed its

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name to Korea Telecom (KT). It also mandated the privatization of the Data Communication Corporation,[17] and the Korea Mobile Telecommunication Co.[18]

Despite these efforts, the Korean telecommunications service industry remained in a somewhat backward state. The crudeness of the Korean telecommunications service industry even produced an embarrassing episode. When the United States requested to open up the "Additional Telecommunications Service" market, South Korean representatives did not even understand what their American counterparts were asking of them.[19] External pressure was not the sole reason for the first market reform of 1990 even if the reform reflected most of the requests of the United States in bilateral negotiations between the two countries. The first reform should be understood within a broader context, including domestic market evolution and external pressures for market opening.

In the late 1980s, the Korean telecommunications service market was under pressure to move forward for further development. At this time, South Korean government policy focused on the expansion of service availability without consideration for service quality and content. The policy objective was already met when each household possessed at least one fixed phone line in the late 1980s. The government then began to think about the quality of service and the effectiveness of the telecommunications service industry.[20] At the same time, the business sector began to think of that industry as a promising business that could generate a range of future profitable opportunities. Thus, the desire to get into the industry was discussed openly.

The plan of the first reform was laid out in two areas. First, the Korean Government adopted a classification system of telecommunications service providers. The classification criterion was simply whether the service provider possessed a network or not. Those who had a network were classified as network service providers, and the rest as additional service providers. Network service providers were in turn divided into two categories of "general service provider" and "special service provider". Special service providers included those whose services had coverage limitations or special technology, that is, internal network or data transmission.

Secondly, limited competition was introduced into some telecommunications service areas. International telephone services, mobile phone services, and additional services were opened to market competition. Except for the additional services, a duopoly market structure was introduced. In each classified service area, a different set of regulations was applied. In the case of market entry, general service areas needed to get a "nomination" from the state authority, for special

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service areas an "approval", and for additional services "registration" only. Upon consideration of the public nature of the business, a strict limitation of shareholding was imposed on the general service entities,[21] a relaxed limitation for the special service area,[22] and no limitation for the additional service area.

The underlying idea of the second market reform of 1994 was to remove the distinction between "general service provider" and "special service provider", to relax the ownership restrictions on facilities manufacturers, and to introduce competition to long-distance telephony and new services such as Personal Communication Systems (PCS) and Trunked Radio System (TRS) in the market.

By removing the distinction between general services and special services and integrating them into the network services, the trend towards technological convergence between wire and wireless telecommunications was taken into account. In the previous regulation, line-based service providers were prohibited from engaging in wireless telecommunication services, and vice versa under the classification of general services and special services.[23] Under the new regulation, network service providers could diversify their businesses within the listed services in the Telecommunication Business Act. If any network service provider wanted to engage in a service that was not listed in the Act, it would have to obtain approval from the authority. However, additional service providers could operate any kind of telecommunications service business, except for the listed areas of network services. The limitation of majority shareholder's equity share was still maintained in the telephony businesses. However, the prohibition of being a majority shareholder by any telecommunications facility manufacturer was removed. Since the facility manufacturers were mostly *chaebols* (large conglomerates), entitling them to the same privileges as other players in the telecommunications service market implied significant changes in the future market structure.

The third market reform of 1995 was intended to promote further competition in the telecommunications service market by issuing new licences in several service areas. More freedom was given to potential players to enter the market.[24] The intention was to make the concept of market competition a truly meaningful one. By further opening the domestic telecommunications service market to foreign players, the Korean Government hoped to gear up the domestic market to international competition.

The state-owned backbone carrier, Korea Telecom (KT), was subjected to another round of reform so as to secure the national telecommunications network and at the same time to grow as a leading company in the national telecommunications industry. More dis-

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cretionary power in operating the business was granted, and several regulatory limits as a state-owned company were removed. The improvement of business competitiveness was a major concern. Therefore, several measures for administrative innovation and business effectiveness were introduced in Korea Telecom.

The Philippine Case of Market Liberalization in the Telecommunications Industry

Several explanations may be given for developments in the Philippines' telecommunications market liberalization. One major reason was prolonged poor service. After forty years of independence, teledensity had gone up by only 1.7 per cent, with service coverage representing only 16 per cent of total land area.[25] Apart from mounting backlog problems, Abrenica has pointed out that the problems of the Philippine telecommunications sector were more serious than what the supply shortage suggested. Poor quality of service, an imbalanced distribution of service between rural and urban areas, outdated infrastructure, and inadequate interconnection of telecommunications facilities stemmed from weak pressure on carriers to upgrade and expand their existing infrastructure owing to the absence of market competition.[26] Although the process of deregulating the industry started in 1987, it was only in 1989 that new licences were granted and new operators allowed to enter the market. In that year, several telecommunications markets were opened up. Two firms were allowed into the cellular mobile phone market. Domestic and international trunk services were also opened to competition.[27] However, the strong resistance from the incumbent monopoly company, Philippine Long Distance Telephone (PLDT), did not allow for any meaningful competition.

A sweeping change in the Philippine telecommunications market came about with the advent of the Ramos administration. Two Executive Orders (EO) were issued in 1993, namely EO59 and EO109. EO59 required compulsory interconnection between authorized public telecommunications carriers in order to create a universally accessible and fully integrated nationwide telecommunications network, thereby encouraging greater private sector investment in telecommunications. EO109 required all Cellular Mobile Telecommunications Service (CMTS) operators to install at least 400,000 telephone lines within three years, and International Gateway Facilities (IGF) operators to provide 300,000 lines within five years. EO109 served as the vehicle to implement the Service Area Scheme (SAS) and the Basic Telephone Programme, with the country being divided into eleven service areas, combining profitable and unprofitable areas, and licences being granted to eight telecommunications carriers.

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Republic Act (RA) 7925 of 1995 defined the number of areas that came under public authority and the market principle related to telecommunications service. RA7925 took into account the ownership structure of the telecommunications entities in order to encourage efficiency and public accountability. In Article 8, Section 21, in compliance with the constitutional mandate to democratize the ownership of public utilities, all telecommunications entities with regulated types of services were to make a *bona fide* public offering through the stock exchange of at least 30 per cent of their aggregate common stock within a period of five years from the enunciation of the Act, or the entity's start of commercial operations, whichever date was later.

Rate and tariff fixing were deregulated with the removal of the 12 per cent cap on the rate of return. Instead, a sliding scale of fair, just, and reasonable returns was provided to encourage investments in the industry. In sectors where there was sufficient competition, rate fixing was fully deregulated. With this Act, the policy of network interconnection was emphasized, but instead of mandatory regulations, access charge or revenue-sharing arrangements were left to the interconnecting telephone companies' contractual agreements, except in cases of unresolvable disagreement or prejudice to public interests, in which the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) might intervene.[28]

Value-added services (VAS), defined as enhanced services beyond those ordinarily provided for by local exchange operators, inter-exchange operators, and overseas carriers, including Internet services, were deregulated through this Act. A VAS provider that did not set up its own network and relied solely on the transmission, switching, and local distribution facilities of enfranchised telephone companies, did not need to secure a franchise, and in order to operate, needed only to register with the NTC. The only constraint remaining for investors was the issue of ownership. By constitutional mandate, the Philippine public utility companies, including telecommunications entities, require a franchise from the Philippine Congress to operate, which can be granted only to Philippine citizens or corporations at least 60 per cent of whose capital is owned by Philippine citizens.[29]

Comparative Review

Both South Korea and the Philippines have followed the global trend of market liberalization since the late 1980s, speeding this up in the 1990s. Along with the drastic changes to the market environment, several new means of telecommunications services have been adopted and widely diffused to the local markets in a very short span of time. Korea and the Philippines, however, have different backgrounds in the evolution and growth of the telecommunications service market.

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At the beginning, the Korean telecommunications service industry was organized as a monopoly structure under the concept of providing a public service. Thus, the performance of service was directly linked to the government's effectiveness. When the country reached the stage of economic take-off in the 1970s, South Korea was ruled by an import substitution industrialization (ISI) regime. The growing local demands for telecommunications services led the government to develop the local telecommunications manufacturing industry. The state-led development project on telecommunications equipment proved to be a success. As a result, the local demands for telecommunications services were effectively fulfilled with locally made equipment. Once the market liberalization pressure from external forces, specifically from the United States, became a reality, the quantitative demands of the telecommunications service in Korea were already met.

The Philippine telecommunications service industry was, on the other hand, governed by the private sector under a monopoly structure. The long period of privileged monopoly position did not motivate the PLDT to enhance service levels and to develop related technologies. Since the Philippine Government carried out a policy of free trade for a long time after a short period of the ISI regime in the 1950s, any systematic effort to spawn the local telecommunications manufacturing industry did not succeed.

Given different market environments and different sets of weaknesses, South Korea and the Philippines pursued different goals in the market liberalization scheme. In the case of South Korea, the basic needs of the telecommunications service were already fulfilled when the country involved itself in market reform. Thus, the reform focused on enhancing the competitiveness of the industry by rearranging the market structure and reformulating existing regulations. It was also designed to introduce advanced technology, and at the same time strengthen domestic market players by providing a competitive environment ahead of the full opening of the domestic market to foreign players.

On the other hand, the Philippines tried to solve the problem of a notoriously bad telecommunications service. The malfunction of the telecommunications service sector was one of the main issues that the Philippine Government had to solve in order for the national economy to pick up. Since the industry was in private hands, introducing market competition was considered as the best option to discipline the stagnant monopoly company, the PLDT.

In the case of Korea, the conflict between the incumbent market player and new entrants was not prominent. Since the incumbent was a state-owned corporation, the intention of regulatory authority could

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be well reflected in the way it implemented the rules. In fact, at the beginning of the market opening, the new market entrants were given certain advantages to increase their market share as the government laid a foundation for meaningful market competition. Until the third reform, KT was simply nurturing and facilitating the new market players rather than competing with them.

Unlike the Korean case, the Philippines experienced a conflict between the incumbent and new market entrants, which was the most prominent issue in the early stages of market liberalization. In addition to the fact that the incumbent was a profit-oriented private corporation, relaxed regulatory measures such as determining the interconnection tariffs by voluntary mutual agreement allowed the incumbent backbone carrier, the PLDT, enough room to protect its own vested interests by fending off new competitors as much as it could.

Although several concerns and problems have been revealed in the course of policy implementation, the basic goals of market reform in both countries have been met at a certain level. The Korean telecommunications service industry has become one of the most vibrant in the world in terms of the scale of market and infrastructure. In the case of the Philippines, the telephone penetration rate has increased dramatically, and, noticeably, the Philippine telecommunications service market reform has attracted a huge amount of foreign investment in the construction of basic infrastructure.[30]

The Role of Political Players in the Market Liberalization of the Korean and Philippine Telecommunications Service Industries

In order to realize market liberalization, each country has to go through several distinguishable stages, from recognizing problems and challenges, to reaching a consensus towards a new policy idea and designing a strategy to implement new policy directions. Formulating new policy means a paradigm shift. The ideological background of market liberalization has been neo-liberalism, which began to develop internationally in the 1980s.

Political Players in the Korean Telecommunications Market Liberalization

The liberalization paradigm took place in Korean society during the administration of Chun Doo-Hwan through deliberate efforts to differentiate it from the previous regime of authoritarianism. The new regime's inclination towards the neo-liberalist ideology was not different from the orientation of the external environment wherein the same ideology became a popularly accepted paradigm internationally.

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Starting from the late 1980s, strong market liberalization pressure derived from external factors. The United States began to pressure the South Korean Government during mutual trade negotiations. Developments on multilateral negotiations in the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), and later the WTO (World Trade Organization), further forced the Korean Government to open its telecommunications service market. Faced with these international pressures, the Korean Government had no choice but to accept the reality.

The emergence of a market-oriented paradigm in the Korean telecommunications service industry did not encounter strong obstacles because of factors in both the internal and external environments. Once the ideology was settled, each of the concerned parties began to mobilize efforts to maximize their benefits from it. The Ministry of Postal and Communications (MPC), among government agencies, exercised strong influence on the telecommunications service industry. On the other hand, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MCI) also had its hands deep in the telecommunications market liberalization process, given the presence of the manufacturing sector in the telecommunications industry. These two ministries operated with different objectives. The MPC tried to develop and expand the telecommunications service industry through its supervision. Immediate market liberalization was foremost in its objectives. On the other hand, the MCI needed to protect the domestic telecommunications facility manufacturers, mostly the top *chaebols*. The latter groups enjoyed privileges in the domestic market under the government's policy of protectionism. Given the inevitability of market liberalization, the MCI tried to gain much time to strengthen the domestic manufacturing sector so that it could become more competitive.[31]

In the business sector, the de facto monopoly company, KT, became the opposition stronghold in resisting market liberalization as this might take away its privileges. KT was a state-owned enterprise; hence, it could not oppose the government's policy direction. The business bloc, specifically the *chaebols*, held contradictory perceptions regarding market liberalization. The top four Korean *chaebols*, namely, Samsung, Hyundai, LG, and Daewoo, which all engaged in the telecommunications facility manufacturing industry, enjoyed a domestic market protected from foreign competition. Market liberalization *per se* inevitably implied that domestic manufacturers had to compete with foreign suppliers. The introduction of competition in the service market expected a huge amount of fresh investment in telecommunications infrastructure. Opening up the industry to the private sector meant that local manufacturers could not enjoy privileges to supply telecommunications

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equipment to the state-owned KT exclusively, and they would have to compete with foreign suppliers. The domestic manufacturers would certainly be the losers in such competition.[32] The local facility manufacturers were also hoping to get into the telecommunications service industry, but because of their position as facility suppliers, they gave limited support to the MPC's stand.

The social sector, on its part, still had to articulate its interests in the process of liberalization of the telecommunications service market. Since the mutual negotiations with the United States on the market opening of the telecommunications industry were kept secret from the public, the social sector was not aware of what was discussed from the start. However, the social sector began to get involved in the matter after the deadlock. Concerned groups from the business sector and the state sector, specifically opposition politicians, tried to mobilize public opinion on the telecommunications market liberalization issue in favour of their interests.

The Political Players of the Philippine Telecommunications Market Liberalization

The advent of a democratic regime in 1986 spawned the hope that the traditional social structure might change in the Philippines. Such expectations were based on the political foundation of the new Aquino administration, whose major constituencies were the urban middle classes and professionals. Although several reform efforts were initiated and implemented in order to undo a number of ill-effects of the long years of the Marcos dictatorship, the Aquino administration found itself unable to sustain its initial enthusiasm as the regime confronted quite a few political challenges, such as numerous attempted *coups d'etat*.

With the assumption to power of the Ramos administration, the Philippines seemed to have gotten rid of traditional politics wherein élites monopolized state rents among themselves. Unlike Aquino, who was surrounded by her large land-owning clans and their cronies, Ramos, at the onset of his presidency, had a degree of independence from traditional vested interests. He owed his victory not so much to big business or the landed élites but largely to the mobilization of the government machinery and its resources, such as the network he had established in the military.[33]

With respect to the telecommunications market liberalization in the Philippines, external factors had provided strong support to the process. In the late 1980s, the development of the international telecommunications services market was essentially driven by the demands of multinational corporations for advanced network services

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across those countries in which they did business, or to which they desired access. This market segment was increasingly supplied by transnational operators who could provide consistency of service quality and price by integrating traffic obtained through foreign licensing arrangements, or alliance structures onto their global information networks.[34]

The government sector was the leading force in market liberalization in the 1990s. The under-developed infrastructure and poor telecommunications service began to be recognized as one of the major constraints in national economic development. Even though the problem was clearly identified, the reform initiative was not easy to sustain because of the power structure in Philippine society. The close relationship between political power and business élites simply did not allow the state to take away the vested interests of business. Since the democratic political system was instituted in the country, the government no longer held sole political power. The legislative body and other social groups also became influential factors in national policy-making. Traditionally, the policy-making process in the Philippines was highly personalized, rather than institutionalized. The personal relationship with political power-holders, especially the President, was an important factor in determining the prospects of any business. The ideological tendency of the person in charge also influenced the nature of policy. This tendency provided a reason why government decisions in many cases were not sustained for long periods and changed often, depending on fluctuations in the political climate and changes in bureaucratic personnel.

In the Philippine telecommunications service sector, the long-time de facto monopoly company, PLDT, existed as a strong opponent to market liberalization. With its huge financial resources and strong political connections, the PLDT mounted several barriers against market liberalization. Under the Marcos regime, only a few telecommunications service providers were able to maintain their profitable status by relying mainly on political connections. When market liberalization was set in place, the telecommunications service sector became a playground among the traditional business élites. In the Philippine business context, only these élite groups were capable of putting up the huge amount of initial investment. They were the only groups who could attract foreign investors in order to initiate joint projects in building telecommunications infrastructure. Even though they came from the same élite groups, the new market entrants had to overcome the unfriendly incumbent company's various ways of disrupting market activity.

The Philippine social sector in the 1990s was active in some political matters. However, the area and method of influencing state

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policy-making were yet to be articulated to be able to pursue its own interests to the end. Some reform-oriented bureaucrats steered the vibrant energy of the social sector in order to overshadow the claims from vested groups.[35] However, the telecommunications market liberalization process in the Philippines did not spare much space for the social sector to be involved and take its share. The social sector simply provided a backdrop of the political process between the political and business interest groups. Still, the existence of the vibrant social sector could not be downplayed. Without its existence, the Ramos administration's initiative to dismantle the monopoly could have proved difficult or possibly unsuccessful in bringing competition into the market.

In the Philippines, the market liberalization was a big challenge to vested interest groups, which exploited the market with monopoly privileges which were closely connected to political power. Paul D. Hutchcroft classified the Philippines as a patrimonial oligarchic state wherein the dominant social forces had an economic base largely independent of the state apparatus, but nonetheless the state played a central role in the process of wealth accumulation.[36] The market liberalization efforts, especially under the Aquino administration, clearly demonstrated the tendencies of the patrimonial oligarchic state.

The Role of the Political Players in the Korean and Philippine Telecommunications Market Liberalization

From the two country cases, it is clear that market liberalization has proved its effectiveness and productiveness despite hidden agendas. The market liberalization paradigm has become a global trend since the 1980s. Developing countries have had to adjust themselves to this newly emerging global economic environment. South Korea and the Philippines experienced drastic changes in their respective political structures as a result of the democratization movement in the late 1980s. Under the democratic political system, the political power centre diffused to a number of political players, which made the market liberalization process more complicated. Any single player could not dominate the decision-making process. Thus, a country's economic policy needs to be derived from a mixture of several interests among competing political players.

The influences from external factors were quite different in the two country cases of market liberalization. In Korea, external pressure provided the imperative to initiate market reform. Domestically, the state-owned monopoly company performed reasonably enough to meet the people's basic expectations of service. The localization of telecommunications technology was also an important factor in

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explaining the fast expansion of the local telecommunications service industry. The economic level of the country had reached the point where advanced telecommunications demands began to expand drastically. Advanced foreign countries also tried to explore potential business interests in the emerging markets. Thus, external pressures focused on the opening of the market to foreign players. In facing external pressures, the South Korean Government realized the necessity to improve the competitiveness of the industry ahead of full opening of the domestic telecommunications market to international players.

In the Philippines, the private-led telecommunications industry was notorious in providing poor services. However, the monopoly company was the only available one to carry out important projects in relation to the country's telecommunications infrastructure. Multilateral organizations, specifically the World Bank, provided financing mainly to the monopoly company, which eventually prolonged the monopoly structure of the industry. The telecommunications market in the Philippines was not very attractive because of the low level of the country's economic development in terms of the population's ability to afford a telephone line.[37] As a result, external factors were rather passive players in the Philippines' telecommunications market liberalization process. However, the expansion of international transactions pressured the Philippine Government to improve the telecommunications infrastructure not only for telecommunications *per se* but also for the country's economic development. The Philippine Government through initiatives during the Aquino administration experienced many difficulties in trying to induce foreign investments to the industry. In reality, the market liberalization was very successful, resulting in foreign investments pouring into the country.

The impact of external pressures could not, however, explain the entire picture of state behaviour towards the market liberalization policies for telecommunications in the two countries. The traditional characteristics of the state bore their stamp in the process of market reforms. The democratization in the two countries did not modify much the basic characteristics of state behaviour. Traditionally, the Korean state was characterized as a developmental state. In the process of telecommunications market reform under the democratized political system, the state still placed the country's economic development at the head of all other considerations. In contrast, the predatory characteristics of the Philippine state did not change much even though the country's democratization brought in new political élite groups. The new political élites still followed the same practices which had been pursued for centuries by the traditional élites. The telecom-

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munications market reform was treated as one of the means to exploit business interests using political power.

In the relationship between the state and the business sector in the telecommunications market liberalization, the two countries differed in many aspects. In South Korea, the telecommunications service industry had been monopolized by state-owned companies. As a result, the resistance from the incumbent monopoly company was effectively managed by the state. In fact, the state showed a certain consideration for the national backbone carrier not to lose its market competitiveness. Since the Korean business sector in the telecommunications industry had been heavily dependent on the state's industrial policy for its business, it was withheld for selfish interests. In the Philippines, where the private company monopolized the industry, the Ramos administration, in fact, had to fight a heavy battle with the incumbent monopoly company. Since state–business relations had been mixed with personal relations among political and business élites, the business sector thrived largely independently of the state entities. The strong opposition from the monopoly even distorted the initial scheme of market liberalization by mobilizing political clout.

Owing to the characteristics of the telecommunications service industry, which had been considered a natural monopoly, market liberalization could not create the conditions for redistributing the business interests to more people. The results of the telecommunications market liberalization in the two countries showed that the most influential business groups eventually occupied the entire industry. It was a common justification of the industry's tendency towards monopoly that the telecommunications service industry needed enormous investments. Although this argument was plausible in a sense, technological advances discredited this thesis. A more realistic approach towards the matter is the importance and prospects of the industry in the present and future business world. It is natural that the most powerful business groups occupy the most promising business territory. The liberalized competition environment further facilitates the emergence of the top business groups in the industry.

The democratic political system provided both freedom and constraints to the business sector. The diffused power centres allowed them to be more independent from the traditional patron–client relationship in the context of concentrated political power. On the other hand, the business sector had to expand its concerns to wider areas, among them the political power struggle and social feeling about economic justice, as all these impacted on the country's politics.

The social sectors of the two countries provided significant support to their governments' efforts to liberalize the telecommunications

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industry. In reality, market liberalization had positive effects on the consumers' point of view in terms of widening service areas and lowering rates, given the market competition. However, the involvement of the social sectors in the process of market liberalization was rather indirect and often manipulated by other interest groups. In many aspects, both countries shared common characteristics in their social sectors, prominently the vigorousness of the movement that had grown during the long period of dictatorships in both countries. However, there were certain differences in the process of the telecommunications market liberalization which had to do with the role that the social sectors played and the power they demonstrated in the process of policy implementation.

In South Korea, the social sectors became more organized and articulate in terms of effectiveness of movements. The strong social feeling against the *chaebols* effectively influenced the government to impose certain limitations on their involvement in the industry. The social demands for economic justice, specifically the distribution of social wealth to the wider population, applied in the formula of the telecommunications market liberalization by encouraging the licence applicants to formulate broad-based consortia. The strong anti-corruption movements eventually prosecuted a former minister involved in a bribery scandal. The vibrant and independent social sector constituted strong indirect pressure to the government to formulate particular policies in each stage of market reform.

In the Philippines, the social sector provided strong support to and active involvement in the Ramos administration's efforts to liberalize the industry. However, the social movement was not sustained until the market liberalization scheme stabilized and produced certain benefits for society. While the contents of the executive order were watered-down by the Congress, the social sector did not effectively mobilize against it. The Philippine social sector was not independent and well-organized enough to articulate its own interests. In many cases, *ad hoc* organizations were created and mobilized for certain issues by interest groups, whether these came from the state or from the business sector. In the Philippine telecommunications market liberalization, the social sector did not get a fair share of benefits. The expansion of service areas and the lowered rates did not benefit the entire population equally, especially in a situation where more than half of the population remained in an economic condition which meant that telephone services were considered unaffordable. In reality, the majority of the population was alienated from the benefits which were supposed to be generated by the state and enjoyed by the entire population. The benefits were extracted by the few élite groups in Philippine politics and business.

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The democratization of the political system increased the role of the social sector in the country's policy-making process. Since most of the influential positions in the government agencies were affected by the political climate, which was closely connected with periodic elections, it was but natural that the policy-makers became aware of the feelings of the social sector. However, the real power of the social sector mainly depended on its inherent characteristics. In South Korea, the broad-based middle-classes were the driving force of the country's democratization. The high level of education and financial independence of the middle-classes allowed the social sector to effectively develop its own way of influencing a democratizing political system. Consistent monitoring and systematic involvement in governing matters made the policy-makers more aware of the existence of the social sector.

In the Philippines, although the urban middle-classes and professionals were recognized as the main actors of the country's democratization movement in the 1980s, the social movement was not able to sustain its strength. Only a few people could afford to involve themselves actively in social issues under an unequal socio-economic structure. Thus, the heavy dependence of the social sector on other interest groups in terms of finance and organization limited any potential of the social sector to articulate its own interests. The social movement on the issue of the telecommunications market liberalization clearly showed the limitation of the social sector in the Philippines.

Table 3 illustrates a comparative perspective of the two countries' market liberalization process, with a focus on their differences. The two countries dealt with different kinds of internal and external environments out of which the state had to design the market liberalization schemes. The political dynamics among the players in the two countries, operating in different characteristics, produced their own ways of searching for a market liberalization formula.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The liberalization that occurred in the South Korean and Philippine telecommunications service market was an integral part of the trend towards neo-liberalism, which the world has largely experienced since the 1980s. The transition of the two countries' political systems from authoritarian to democratic regimes provided a favourable condition for the new paradigm to be accepted smoothly in the 1990s. With the development of the new paradigm, the importance of the telecommunications industry increased enormously in a globalizing world. Thus, the global telecommunications industry has changed in business scale and technological level. All these trends have stimulated

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TABLE 3
Comparative Perspective on the Market Liberalization of the South Korean and Philippine Telecommunications Industries

Items	*Criteria*	*South Korea*	*The Philippines*
Policy Framework	Strategy; Objective	Gradual market liberalization. Focused on diversity and strength of local telecoms service industry.	Swift market liberalization. Focused on the expansion of telecoms networks.
External Factors	Tendency & Effects; Local Response	Aggressive in market opening. Provided a clear milestone for market liberalization and consolidated domestic players. Preventive to external influence.	Passive in market opening. Made the state recognize the backwardness of its telecoms industry. Attracted more investment from foreign sources.
State Sector	Motivation; Characteristics	To cope with external pressures. Developmental state and strong leadership.	To consolidate political power/ interests. Predatory and weak leadership.
Business sector	Market structure; Characteristics	From state monopoly to market competition. Actively claimed its interests, but still submissive to the state's authority.	From private monopoly to market competition. *Aggressive to protect vested interests with strong political leverage.*

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TABLE 3 — cont'd

Items	*Criteria*	*South Korea*	*The Philippines*
Social Sector	*Characteristics; Influence*	Independent and effective organization. Actively involved in and influenced state policy on market liberalization.	Dependent and easily manipulated. Provided strong support to state effort in market reform, but could not materialize its benefits.
After Market Liberalization	Results	Market expanded rapidly, and the country emerged as one of the leading economies in the global telecoms industry. The *chaebols* occupied the centre of the industry, but the state still maintained a strong regulation in terms of imposing fair competition in the market.	Telecoms network was expanded drastically, but the subscription rates increased slowly. Market competition was set in place, but still the market remained in a weak environment for competition. Traditional business élite groups occupied the centre of the industry.

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liberalization in the telecommunications service markets in South Korea and the Philippines.

Economic policy changes within a state are expected to dispense with the existing market system and to create a new one. Simultaneously, conflicts between the would-be winner and the would-be loser would emerge. In a newly democratized society, the new economic policy changes expected, of course, to channel the benefits to the segments of the population which were previously deprived of social benefits during past authoritarian regimes. However, such expectation did not automatically come true once the new process of economic policy changes were set in motion. The benefits of the economic policy changes were still divided among the members of society according to the socio-political power structure. Given the different contexts of the democratization process in the two countries, the telecommunications service market liberalization produced several differences in policy formulation and implementation, as well as results.

The power structure among the political players eventually determined the winner and the loser in the policy formulation and implementation of market liberalization. In South Korea, the balanced power structure resulted in a comparatively desirable market situation wherein each sector of society could enjoy what it had staked in the liberalized market. The state maintained strong regulatory power to ensure desirable market conditions for competition. The business sector increased its profits amidst more favourable conditions for financial access. The social sector also gained strong leverage to influence the government's economic policy towards the business sector, which might abuse its market power against consumers.

In the Philippines, because of the unequal socio-political structure which did not break down during the period of democratization, the economic policy change was not able to create a new environment for a new structure to emerge. Under the monopoly market structure, the state agency did not have much power to get involved in the market. The weak state agency could not properly discipline the politically and financially powerful monopoly company. In a liberalized market with several market players, the state agency could have been involved in more areas, given its strong authority. However, the Philippine state did not succeed in holding a strong grip in the liberalized market. With the perception that deregulation was a virtue in market liberalization, the Philippine state reduced the level of regulatory power. The Philippine business sector, specifically the traditional business élites, was the major beneficiary of the Philippine telecommunications service market liberalization. The business sector had gone through different government administrations and had learnt how to deal with the regimes.

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The Ramos administration's initiative in market liberalization, which was to dismantle the power of the traditionally vested interest groups, was not able to sustain its momentum because of the weakness of the state. The Philippine social sector could not substantiate the benefits from market liberalization despite its significant contributions to market liberalization.

Democratization and globalization created new dynamics in the two countries' domestic politics. Democratization opened wide the political arena to the private sector. This reduced the absolute power of the state in matters of governance. The people expected more rights and liberty in whatever area of life they engaged in. On the other hand, globalization diminished the role of the state in certain areas. It created a new international political environment wherein more participants from various sectors of global society played important roles. However, there were still many areas in which the state had to take part and retain strong authority. Nation-states are the entities which people still rely on for their security and protection. Although the power of the state has diminished, the heavy responsibility of the state still requires strong power. These contradictory facts have made the role of the state more complicated and difficult.

Intrinsically, democratization instigated the emergence of the social sector, which ushered in certain dynamics into the political power structure. However, this did not automatically change the basic tendency of the state and the state–business relationship. In other words, the democratic changes in the political system did not secure the benefits for the people equally. This depended more on the intrinsic characteristics of the state and the domestic socio-economic structure. Democratization itself did not change the above two factors. Furthermore, democratization could even widen the gap between the haves and have-nots in society. Decentralization and deregulation of state authority further made it difficult to correct the unequal social structure.

As shown in the two countries' market liberalization, although democratization and globalization pushed the state to liberalize the telecommunications industry, there were certain lingering expectations for the state to engage in the market. The role of the state is to make the liberalized market work properly and to protect the people from any arbitrary behaviour of the business sector which might prove damaging to the interests of the people. The state is obliged to create the optimum conditions to develop the national economy and to increase people's welfare. The state is also expected to improve its own domestic industry to meet international competition.

This comparative review of the liberalization of the telecommunications service markets in South Korea and the Philippines

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confirms the main thesis of this study. The telecommunications service market liberalization was due to the new paradigm shift towards neo-liberalism internationally. The nature and content of the two countries' market liberalization differed according to the domestic power structure among the political players.

Together with the changes in the political environment, the role of the state must evolve and must be adjustable. The power of the state and the expectations from the people are also continuously changing, a situation which often encounters contradictory situations. There are times when the people's expectations demand more strong state power, but the state is not strong enough to respond to these needs. At the opposite extreme is the situation when state power is too strong, and people feel that their liberties are suppressed. It is difficult to know at which point optimum benefits are produced for the people and the country.

The state should be more skilful in handling such contradictory situations. Since the political power structure has its dynamics for change, it can also provide the key to deal with problems. The state can strengthen its power by juggling the different private sectors in a society. In its relationship with the private sector, the state should make each sub-sector equal partners. In a democratic society, the state should also give more emphasis to the improvement of the social sector. A systematic programme for encouraging the social sector to articulate itself is an ideal precondition. In order to consolidate a democratic society, the state should exert energy to make society balanced, thus producing meaningful checks that arise with the conflict and tension among the various political players.

As indicated in this study, the state should not ignore the importance of the local industrial and manufacturing sector. Neo-liberalists claim the rationality of comparative advantage. However, in this information age, the factor-based comparative advantage thesis is diminishing in relevance. As Michael E. Porter has noted, the state should seek competitive advantages in a globalized world. Competitive advantage is created and sustained through a highly localized process. Differences in national economic structures, values, culture, institutions, and histories contribute profoundly to competitive success. Porter has also stressed the necessity of a stronger role for the state. While globalization of competition might appear to make the nation less important, instead it has made it more so. With fewer impediments to trade to shelter uncompetitive domestic firms and industries, the home market takes on a growing significance because it is the source of the skills and technology that underpin competitive advantage.[38]

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With respect to industrial development and how it should proceed, the character of the state is one of its determining factors. This is historically situated and continuously affects national economic development. The developmental state shares the same foundations of nationalism. Nationalists emphasize the industrialization of the country. However, industrialization cannot be sustained without efforts to promote technological development. A high level of technology is one of the most important criteria to judge a country's level of development. As history shows, technological development is impossible without systematic support from the state authority. Advanced Western countries experienced a period wherein the state had a strong drive for industrialization in the early period of development. The successful late-industrializers also followed the same steps, although the time-span was shortened. When the technological level reached a certain point, and the market could function competitively with its own dynamism to recreate itself, the private sector should have taken the leading position to further advance technological development and improve market mechanisms. Market liberalization should coincide with such developmental processes.

The importance of the telecommunications industry will grow continuously, and the evolution of the related technology will go far beyond its present state. The level of telecommunications industrial development may be an important factor in judging the capability to create the competitive advantage in this highly globalized world. The telecommunications infrastructure becomes a factor of national competitiveness. International capital may flow freely from one place to another, but its basis lies in the hub of the international information network. In such an environment, the telecommunications industry will be a basic infrastructure in national economic development.

In dealing with the telecommunications industry, the state should not consider it as a business which simply generates profits. The telecommunications service is one means by which to engage in social language which could govern the cultural aspects of society. Business usually follows and adjusts to the underlying culture of society. However, business, like telecommunications, could create new cultures. Once the industry opens up fully, it would have to confront the danger of losing its cultural identity.

The phenomenon of a flourishing text message service in the Philippines can only be explained when cultural and other economic factors are taken into account. A new technology revitalizes certain aspects of culture. Proper guidance for the telecommunications industry is essentially to protect and strengthen the national cultural heritage

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which would count as among the country's strengths in national competitiveness in the global market. This is a reason why every country must retain the crucial decision on rights to the telecommunications industry although it might be open to foreigners. The more the world becomes globalized, the more the state needs to make a country different from others. Such idiosyncrasy and uniqueness becomes increasingly important factors in global competitiveness.

The telecommunications service industry should be guided to keep in mind profound national interests. The state must give attention to the emerging problems related to the rapid development of new technologies. The preparation of a cultural and psychological remedy should be developed hand-in-hand with the development of the telecommunications industry. If the development of material aspects cannot be properly absorbed by the people, it can create more problems than would be expected. It can also lead to a new social divide among the people in terms of literacy in modern technology, thus spawning confusion and conflict. The trend towards convergence between telecommunications and the computer-based Internet into one small handset may also change people's lifestyles and ways of thinking. It is, therefore, necessary for the state to provide people and society at large with the proper orientation to confront such changes.

NOTES

1. The East Asian newly industrialized countries, such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore have been extensively studied under this framework.
2. Karl Fields, "Strong States and Business Organizations in Korea and Taiwan", in *Business and the State in Developing Countries*, edited by Sylvia Maxfield and Ben Ross Schneider (Ithaca, New York, and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 122–51.
3. Huntington has argued that economic development was one of the important factors to stimulate the third wave of democratization (1974 ~). Economic development appears to have promoted changes in social structure and values that, in turn, encouraged democratization. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).
4. Strategic coalition here contains two different aspects. One is that the business sector is the state's machinery for the gathering of industrial data and to implement its economic policy; the other is the negative aspect of patron–client relationships that revolve around state-created rents.
5. The cases of South Korea and Taiwan during the late 1980s are explicit examples.
6. Stephan Haggard, "Taiwan: From Import Substitution to Export-Led Growth", in Stephan Haggard, *Developing Nations and the Politics of Global Integration* (Washington, D. C: The Brookings Institution, 1995), pp. 76–99.
7. Here, "economic deadlock" means a situation where further economic development

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is deterred because of conventional state economic policy, which had functioned positively in the earlier period.

8. R. Samarajiva, and P. Shields, "Value Issues in Telecommunications Resource Allocation in the Third World", in *Telecommunications, Values, and the Public Interest*, edited by S. B. Lundstedt (New Jersey: Norwood, 1990), pp. 227–53. Cited in Nobuya Inagaki and Romi Mahajan, "Emerging Issues in the International Telecommunications and Information Environment: Research Topics," in *TIPI International White Paper* (Telecommunications and Information Policy Institute, University of Texas, Austin TX, USA, 2000).
9. The comparative method here is regarded as one of discovering empirical relationships among variables, not as a method of measurement. See details about the comparative method in Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method", *American Political Science Review* 65 (1971): 683.
10. The data used in Figure 2 are growth national income (GNI) for Korea and growth domestic product (GDP) for the Philippines. No significant differences exist in these two figures.
11. This argument has been advanced by Dong-Se Cha, Kwang-Suk Kim, and Dwight H. Perkins, eds., *The Korean Economy 1945–1995: Performance and Vision for the 21st Century* (Seoul: Korea Development Institute, 1997).
12. See Pedro V. Salgado, O.P., *The Philippine Economy, History and Analysis* (Quezon City: R.P. Garcia Publishing Co. Inc., 1985).
13. See Temario C. Rivera, *Landlords & Capitalists. Class, Family, and State in Philippine Manufacturing* (Quezon City: Center for Integrative and Development Studies, University of the Philippines Press, 1994).
14. See Hagen Koo and Eun-Mee Kim, "The Developmental State and Capital Accumulation in South Korea", in *State and Development in the Asia-Pacific Rim*, edited by Richard P. Appelbaum and Jeffrey Henderson (Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992); and Soon-Won Kwon, "Economic Justice and Social Welfare: New Principles of Economic Policy", in *Democratization and Globalization in Korea: Assessments and Prospects*, edited by Chung-In Moon and Jong-Ryn Mo (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1999).
15. The following literature provided the background for this analysis: Edberto M. Villegas, *The Political Economy of Philippine Labor Laws* (Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1988); Felipe B. Miranda, ed., *Democratization: Philippine Perspectives* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1997); John J. Carroll, S.J. *The Filipino Manufacturing Entrepreneur, Agent and Product of Change* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1965); Joseph Y. Lim, *Philippine Macroeconomic Development, 1970–1993* (Quezon City: Philippine Center For Policy Studies, 1996); Pedro V. Salgado, O.P., op. cit.; Temario C. Rivera, op. cit.; Grace Gorospe-Jamon, "The El Shaddai Prayer Movement: Political Socialization in a Religious Context", *Philippine Political Science Journal* 20, no. 43 (1999); Luzviminda G. Tancangco and Roger L. Mendosa, "Elections and the Crisis of Legitimacy in the Philippines: A Comparative View of the Marcos and Aquino Regimes", *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 32, nos. 3&4 (July–October 1998); and Temario C. Rivera, "Middle Class Politics: The Philippine Experience", *Journal of Social Science* 45 (Tokyo: September 2000).
16. It was established in 1981 by separating the telecommunications business from the government's direct control.
17. It was established in 1982 in order to provide data communication services, such as information database services and value-added network services.
18. It was established in 1984 and began to provide car-phone and paging services. Cellular phone service started only in 1988.

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19. Shin Cho, Sun-Kyu Choi, and Yong-Kyu Kim, *Telecommunication Market Structure Under Globalization Era*, Research Report 95-03 (KwaCheon City: Korea Information Society Development Institute, 1995), p. 19 (Korean version).
20. Ibid., p. 20.
21. The largest shareholder could not possess more than 10 per cent of company stocks; for the telecommunications facility manufacturers, not more than 3 per cent; and no stock could be held by foreigners.
22. The largest shareholder could not possess more than one-third of the company stocks; for the telecommunications facility manufacturers not more than 10 per cent; for foreigners not more than one-third of the company's stocks, but could not be the largest shareholder. State institutions could invest up to 10 per cent but they could not be the largest shareholder.
23. Wireless telecommunications services were then classified as special services.
24. The existing pre-announcement system made by the government for any new licensing in network telecommunications service was abolished at this time.
25. APEC Secretariat, *The Impact of Liberalization: Communicating with APEC Communities* (Studies in APEC Liberalization, November 1998), p. 5.
26. Ma. Joy V. Abrenica, "Reforming the Telecommunications Industry: Prospects and Challenges", *Economic Policy Agenda, Series No. 3* (Foundation for Economic Freedom, Inc., 1999), p. 5.
27. APEC Secretariat, op. cit., p. 8.
28. Donyaprueth Krairit, "Liberalizing Development: Effects of Telecommunication Liberalization in Thailand and the Philippines" (Ph.D. dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, June, 2001), p. 68.
29. Ibid., pp. 67–68.
30. See International Telecommunication Union, *Yearbook of Statistics, Telecommunication Services Chronological Time Series 1990–1999* (Geneva: ITU, 2001).
31. See Kyung-Min Koo, "Liberalization of Korean IT Industry and the Politics of Policy Change" (Paper presented to the Association of Korean Politics, 1999).
32. KT procured its facilities, specifically electronic exchanges, from domestic suppliers at a higher price of over US$100 per line compared with foreign suppliers. Stated by Rep. Jeong-Hun Jeong at the Transportation and Communication Committee meeting, 145th National Assembly Session, 2 March 1989, from the Committee Minutes (Korean version).
33. See Sheila S. Coronel, "Monopoly", at http://www.pldt.com/monopoly1.htm.
34. Cutler & Company, *WTO Impact Study, Incremental Change or Step Function Gain? Positioning the Philippines' Communications Sector in the Emerging WTO Environment* (Final Report for the DOTC, Philippines, November 1999), p. 68.
35. See Coronel, op. cit.
36. Paul D. Hutchcroft, *Booty Capitalism: The Politics of Banking in the Philippines* (Ithaca, New York, and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 52.
37. The ITU 1998 Report on Universal Access suggested that a household must earn at least an annual income of US$1,340 to afford the service provided by the carrier that deployed the most efficient technology.
38. Michael E. Porter, *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), p. 19.

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The National Reconciliation Process in Myanmar

MAUNG AUNG MYOE

With the release of Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest in May 2002, hopes have been revived for an end to the political deadlock in Myanmar which has prevailed since the early 1990s. Both the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and Aung San Suu Kyi have claimed that they have already gone beyond the phase of confidence-building and mutual trust. However, against the backdrop of past failures in the national reconciliation process, many analysts and observers on Myanmar affairs remain cautious. For a better appreciation and understanding of the current situation, this article provides an overview of the national reconciliation process in Myanmar, discusses factors that have contributed to the recent breakthrough and offers some general recommendations to ensure further success in the process.

Introduction

On 6 May 2002, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) government lifted a restriction on the movement of Aung San Suu Kyi, General Secretary of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and released her from house arrest. The government stated that the release would "mark the start of a new page for the people of Myanmar and the international community".[1] The official statement noted further: "We shall recommit ourselves to allowing all our citizens to participate freely in the life of our political process while giving precedence to national unity, peace and the stability of the country as well as the region."[2] Colonel Hla Min, a government spokesman, said that "the era

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of confrontation is over and the era of co-operation has arrived".[3] At the press conference held a few hours after her release, Aung San Suu Kyi also stated that "the phase of confidence-building [between the government and her] was over and [looked] forward to moving ahead, [and that there would] be another phase in the dialogue or national reconciliation process [which] could begin to tackle policy issues".[4] This article will provide an overview of the national reconciliation process in Myanmar.

The Process of National Reconciliation

In late 1998, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, appointed Alvaro de Soto, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, as his special envoy to Myanmar to break the political deadlock between the government and the political opposition led by Aung San Suu Kyi. That deadlock had more or less been in place since the establishment of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in September 1988, the predecessor of the current SPDC. The issue of deadlock became more acute when the Myanmar Government failed to install an elected government after the general elections in May 1990. The government took harsh measures in restoring law and order in Myanmar, while the political opposition, particularly the NLD, pursued a policy of confrontation with the government. The situation eventually became irreconcilable and completely deadlocked. It was then that the United Nations became involved in attempts to resolve the issue. When Alvaro de Soto paid his first visit to Yangon in October 1998, there was a proposal that the United Nations and the World Bank would reward the Myanmar Government with up to US$1 billion in financial and humanitarian aid if the latter would enter into a meaningful dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi.[5] The Myanmar Government was not happy at all since it viewed such a proposal as an insult. Myanmar Foreign Minister U Win Aung told the press: "This is like offering a banana to a monkey and asking it to dance. We are not monkeys. We won't dance."[6] Soon after another fruitless visit to Yangon in October 1999, Alvaro de Soto lost his enthusiasm in trying to resolve the political deadlock.

However, the Myanmar Government was to welcome the appointment of Razali Ismail as the United Nations' special envoy to Myanmar in April 2000, to facilitate the national reconciliation process. In late June 2000, Razali went to Yangon to explore the situation and to promote political dialogue between the SPDC government and Aung San Suu Kyi. By the time he paid his second visit in October, Suu Kyi was already under house arrest. During his four-day visit, Razali held a series of discussions with the Myanmar authorities, including Senior

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General Than Shwe, Chairman of the SPDC. He also held separate discussions with Suu Kyi. In the meetings, Razali underlined the necessity for national reconciliation in Myanmar and urged both sides to initiate political dialogue as soon as possible. It appeared that the two protagonists took Razali's advice seriously and began to engage in dialogue. When Razali returned to Yangon for a third time in January 2001, the Myanmar Government informed him of progress and allowed him to break the news of the national reconciliation process to the international community.

Razali made a fourth trip to Yangon in June 2001. Shortly thereafter, the Myanmar Government began to free a number of political prisoners,[7] and allowed the reopening of NLD branches all over the country. Before Razali retuned to Yangon for the fifth time in August 2001, the Myanmar Government had lifted restrictions on the movement of U Aung Shwe and U Tin Oo, two senior leaders of the NLD, as part of the confidence-building measures.[8] At the end of his sixth visit to Yangon in November 2001, Razali issued a statement that he was "hopeful that some significant progress could be achieved in the near future in the talks", and he was pleased that "all parties remained committed to the process of national reconciliation and democracy". One report, attributed to Razali after his visit in August 2001, stated that he thought it would take two to four years for civilian rule to be restored in Myanmar.[9] In addition, Razali expressed the hope that he might see a clear road-map by 2002.[10] During his sixth visit to Yangon, Razali also reportedly inquired about the progress of the dialogue and pressed the SPDC leadership to come up with a timetable to show tangible results. He was told that preparations were under way. Moreover, when Senior General Than Shwe reportedly told Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi, at the ASEAN Summit in Brunei in November 2001, that the military leadership "does not care what kind of position Aung San Suu Kyi would hold in the course of democratization", it was interpreted that the SPDC had significantly softened its position on political dialogue and that she might have a future in politics.[11] There was a general impression that the government would inform Razali about the progress of the efforts in national reconciliation and preparations for a political transition when the latter paid his next visit. Razali originally planned to visit Yangon on 19 March 2002 but at the request of the Myanmar Government, he postponed it for a month, to 23 April.

In February 2002, a government spokesman provided an assurance that though "the ongoing process (of national reconciliation and dialogue) might seem to be slow to some, it is a steady and sure process where success is imminent".[12] It appears that Major General Kyaw Win and Brigadier General Than Tun from the Defence Services Intelligence

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Bureau have been a link between the SPDC leaders and Aung San Suu Kyi. It has also been reported that Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt maintains fortnightly contact with the opposition leader.[13] A recent report even stated that Senior General Than Shwe met her on 22 January 2002 and that the meeting lasted for more than two hours.[14]

While all this was going on, there was a failed coup attempt by family members of former elder statesman, Ne Win. Despite this incident, the national reconciliation process continued. Some analysts saw the coup attempt as an indication of "a split within the military government, which would have major implications for the ongoing dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi".[15] However, a government spokesman was adamant that the dialogue would not be affected by the coup attempt.

When news of the dialogue broke out, there was plenty of speculation in the international media. Some reports claimed that while the talks had concentrated on "building confidence and mutual respect" between the two sides, the discussion included issues of substance and the building of a framework and mechanisms for a new administration.[16] In fact, at one stage a false nine-page document came out as a confidential paper. The document suggested the possibility of an interim government and power-sharing agreement between the SPDC and NLD, and which was also to include technocrats.[17] In late April 2002, there was another report which claimed that Aung San Suu Kyi had agreed to sit on a so-called "Emergency Committee" or a "Special Committee" to look into Myanmar's humanitarian needs.[18] Other reports suggested that such a committee would oversee all other non-security matters, such as trade and investment.

At the conclusion of Razali's four-day visit in April 2002, the United Nations issued a statement that "Razali was pleased to have been assured by the [Myanmar] government that the national reconciliation process was on track and he was also encouraged to see that all parties remain[ed] committed to the process and he [was] hopeful that certain progress could take place shortly".[19] Well-placed sources believe that Razali was informed about a "timetable" or some "significant developments" during his visit. Two days later, at a press conference, without much elaboration, Minister for Labour U Tin Win, stated that some progress could be expected "within the next few days aimed at national reconciliation".[20]

Before and after Razali's visit to Yangon, the international community had been pressing the Myanmar Government to release Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest and to come up with a viable initiative to break the impasse. It appears that her release was among the top priorities of the international community seeking progress in efforts at national reconciliation in Myanmar. Many articles seemingly

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unhelpful to the dialogue appeared in the international press. For instance, the Myanmar Government was urged to "bite the bullet" and to "make or break" as it was "the last chance".[21] An editorial in Singapore's *Straits Times* even called the ongoing national reconciliation process "the military regime's cynical calibrations to stave off ostracism with insubstantial concessions to the opposition".[22] With such criticism and pressure on the government, it was to the surprise and delight of the international community that the Myanmar Government released Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest on 6 May 2002.

Building Trust and Mutual Confidence

Building trust and mutual confidence in a distinctly Myanmar way has been an important element in the national reconciliation/reconsolidation process. In this regard, one can draw a contrast with the peace settlements or ceasefire agreements between the Myanmar Government and various armed national groups. One of the most important reasons for the government having dialogue and reaching agreement with various armed national groups in Myanmar was the fact that the negotiations were relatively free from foreign intervention and pressure. It is the firm position of the government that it will not accept any outside interference. Moreover, both the government and the armed national groups kept the contents of negotiations secret, so as to avoid media speculation. This was an important measure to build confidence and mutual trust between the government and the armed national groups.

A lack of trust and mutual confidence as well as foreign interference was the most important factor that had contributed to the political deadlock in Myanmar since 1995. In July 1999, the Myanmar state-owned press offered an explanation for the lack of progress in political dialogue between the government and Aung San Suu Kyi. According to one article, it was the breach of mutual trust and confidence on the part of the opposition leader. The article explained that there was an understanding between Michael Aris, Suu Kyi's husband, and the government that if the former agreed to abide by the existing laws of Myanmar while in Myanmar and followed restrictions on the passing of any information from either outside or inside, the government would allow him to stay in the same house as his wife. As Aris agreed to the conditions, the government permitted him to stay with his wife. However, on his arrival in Bangkok on 22 January 1995, Aris gave a press conference at the airport. He distributed what was termed as "Aung San Suu Kyi's News Release". After this incident, the article said that the government no longer made any moves to meet Aung San Suu Kyi or have dialogue with her. It also said that this was not the first

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such incident; Michael Aris had broken his promise before. The article asked how papers written by Aung San Suu Kyi for the International Human Rights Law Award ceremony, the Olympic Torch Relay ceremony, and for the Joyce Pearce Memorial ceremony, had been transmitted from her residence while she was under house arrest.[23]

To some knowledgeable observers, however, there were other important reasons which played a more significant role in holding back confidence-building measures. It was what the regime believed to be foreign interference. In 1995, the Myanmar Government had been confident that it could reach some form of agreement or understanding on national reconciliation with Aung San Suu Kyi. The government had been holding a national convention to draft a constitution since January 1993. By mid-1995, it had already got basically what it wanted. All the prerogatives sought by the *Tatmadaw* (Myanmar Armed Forces) were already among the 104 basic principles agreed to at the national convention.[24] By early 1995, the Myanmar Government had declared twelve national objectives, divided equally among political, economic, and social sectors.[25] Then in June 1995, a state-owned newspaper began to serialize the "Destiny of Nation", outlining the programmes for the future of Myanmar. Meanwhile, international pressure began to mount for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest. Amid the pressure, Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt indicated in a speech that the political stability and well-being of society were far more important than the well-being of just one individual. The people's initial disappointment turned to surprise when the government freed Aung San Suu Kyi, and even allowed U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Madeline Albright, to pay a visit to Yangon and to meet the opposition leader.

It appeared that the Myanmar Government was interested in resuming a dialogue with Suu Kyi. However, when the government did begin to engage with her seriously, the United States started to exert pressure. It was from that point onwards that the government changed tack and adopted an attitude of indifference. Perhaps the Myanmar Government held the view that meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi would be seen to bow to international pressure. As a result, the government sent signals that it was instead prepared to hold talks with NLD Chairman U Aung Shwe, rather than with Suu Kyi. The situation deteriorated further when Suu Kyi called for trade and investment sanctions on Myanmar and an international boycott of the much publicized "Visit Myanmar Year 1996", in conjunction with a U.S. campaign to further isolate the Myanmar Government. It was the beginning of a period of inertia in the national reconciliation process in Myanmar. One observer commented: "It appeared that the Myanmar government decided not to

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engage in any form of dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi as long as Madeline Albright was in the State Department."[26]

In this respect, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who paid a visit to Yangon in January 2001, stated that the Myanmar junta was willing to hold elections "eventually" though not over the next couple of years. Moreover, he said that the conflict between Aung San Suu Kyi and the government could not be resolved through confrontation. In his words: "what is needed is to put the interest of Myanmar above party interests. And I think the government is willing to discuss with Aung San Suu Kyi to do something to find solutions for Myanmar." He further said that the West should not interfere in Myanmar affairs: "the less the West interferes, the better the prospects for solving the problems. Let the people of Myanmar decide for themselves."[27] While Mahathir shed light, and shared his thoughts on the national reconciliation process in Myanmar, U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright, without realizing the dynamics or configuration of the "power of culture" and "culture of power" in Myanmar society, commented that the regime needed to respect Aung San Suu Kyi as a political leader rather than as a little sister.[28] In fact, it is a "brother-sister" kindness that plays an important role in building trust and mutual confidence between Myanmar's contending parties.

Although Razali Ismail's role has been significant in recent moves at building trust and confidence between the government and Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar, it is essentially the efforts of the two parties concerned that has generated dialogue. Clearly, Razali facilitated the process, but he himself has admitted: "I am the dogs-body for the UN. But always remember that I am not the negotiator. I am only the facilitator."[29] Yet, it appeared that Razali was a shield for the Myanmar Government to fend off international pressure. Through Razali, the Myanmar Government kept the international community informed that the national reconciliation process was on track.

Further Engagement for National Reconciliation

As mentioned earlier, the two sides appeared to lay the groundwork for further engagement, which could eventually lead to the restoration of democracy in Myanmar. Beyond the phase of building trust and confidence, both the government and Aung San Suu Kyi have been confident that they will usher in an era of co-operation, so as to address the issues facing Myanmar today. The UN facilitator, Razali Ismail, took note of the "clear commitment of the military government to move to a civilian and constitutional government". He commented: "It has taken them some time to deal with it. And now that they are dealing

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with it, we should support them and not think negatively."[30] There are some indications that the government is firmly committed to national reconciliation and political transition in the country. It appears that some form of consensus has been reached and broad guidelines for political transition have been agreed upon, particularly among the top three leaders of the SPDC, namely, Senior General Than Shwe, General Maung Aye, and Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt.

The Myanmar Government has reaffirmed that it is still firmly committed to the national reconsolidation process, which is argued by the state-owned media as one step more than just "national reconciliation". It appears that the SPDC government has outlined a framework for further engagement in the national reconciliation process. In January 2002, the government sponsored a series of mass rallies in major cities in the states and divisions to support the government programme of national and rural development. Furthermore, a Special General Meeting of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), a military-backed mass organization, was held on 19 February 2002 at which Senior General Than Shwe addressed delegates about "national ideology" and "nation-building tasks".[31] The Senior General reminded the delegates: "In line with the experiences and lessons learned from history, it [SLORC/SPDC] has laid down and implemented the national tasks of non-disintegration of the Union; non-disintegration of national solidarity; and perpetuation of sovereignty, and *Our Three Main National Causes* is the indisputable national ideology of all our citizens."[32] It seemed that the Special General Meeting of the USDA adopted "*National Ideology and Nation Building*" as the future orientation and task of the USDA, and, by extension, the Myanmar Armed Forces.[33]

Within the SPDC regime and government, after the death of Secretary-2, Lieutenant General Tin Oo, in February 2001; the sacking of Secretary-3, Lieutenant General Win Myint, and Deputy Prime Minister cum Minister of Military Affairs, Lieutenant General Tin Hla; and the resignation of two deputy prime ministers and three ministers, the SPDC had decided not to appoint new secretaries, deputy prime ministers, or ministers. Instead, some ministers were assigned to hold two ministries concurrently. While some analysts think that the sacking of the two powerful figures was to improve the business climate, others thought that it was a clean-out of hardliners unhappy with the possibility of compromises with Aung San Suu Kyi in the ongoing dialogue.[34]

Within the *Tatmadaw* itself, preparations have been under way for leadership transition and a smooth transfer of power. Although Yangon has been awash with rumours for some time about new military positions (such as a bureau of special operations and a bureau of air defence),

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many people were nevertheless still surprised by the new positions, which allowed all regional commanders with SPDC membership to take up the rank of lieutenant-general and a posting within the Ministry of Defence. The most important position created thus far is that held by Major General Thura Shwe Man. The position is known in Myanmar as "*Tatmadaw Nhyinaing Kutkaeyehmu (Kyi, Yay, Lay)*", which can be loosely translated as either "Joint Chief of Staff (Army, Navy, Air)" or "Chief Executive Officer (Army, Navy, Air)".[35] Both the commanders-in-chief of the Navy and the Air Force report to Major General Thura Shwe Man. Moreover, General Maung Aye is reportedly beginning to transfer some of his responsibilities to Major General Thura Shwe Man. Some knowledgeable observers in the Myanmar military believe that Major General Thura Shwe Man will at some stage become Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar Armed Forces as well as Minister for Defence. More importantly, he appears to have the support and confidence of both senior and junior commanders.[36] He is known for his good leadership, in both command and staff positions. The new command arrangement suggests that the present military leadership is planning a smooth leadership transition within the *Tatmadaw*. Furthermore, as it appears that the future Commander-in-Chief (Navy), Rear Admiral Soe Thein, and Commander-in-Chief (Air Force), Major General Myint Swe, were classmates of Major General Thura Shwe Man, the present leadership is also serious about organizational unity within the *Tatmadaw*. Assigning commands to comrades from the same intake (DSA-11) would prevent inter-service rivalry. Even though Major General Myint Swe is being replaced by the present Chief-of-Staff (Air), Brigadier General Myat Hein (DSA-17), there is no indication that the *Tatmadaw* will suffer from organizational disunity.

Behind-the-scenes persuasion (or pressure) also plays an important role in the national reconciliation process in Myanmar. In this respect, one should examine the importance of the so-called "China factor". During his four-day visit to Myanmar, in December 2001, at the invitation of Senior General Than Shwe, Chinese President Jiang Zemin supposedly gave friendly and timely advice to Myanmar leaders that they should implement a political system which would be suitable for the country. Jiang's advice included the need for the Myanmar Government to fulfill its promise of implementing a multi-party democratic system.

In recent years, it appears that China has begun to see Myanmar more as a liability than an asset. To some observers, Myanmar's over-reliance on China for political and economic (developmental) support would have led the Chinese leadership to view Myanmar as a dependent ally. On the other hand, the Myanmar leadership would also probably feel that it is being neglected. Although the early 1990s witnessed high-

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level state visits from China, such as those by General Secretary of the State Council Luo Gan in January 1991, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen in February 1993, and Premier Li Peng in December 1994, the latter half of the 1990s, especially after 1997, failed to witness the cultivation of closer relations. While Premier Zhu Rongji made trips to a number of South and Southeast Asian countries, he did not visit Myanmar. Only when the Myanmar Government began to develop warmer relations with India, did China begin to give more serious attention to Myanmar, sending Vice-President Hu Jintao in July 2001 and then President Jiang Zemin later in December. However, there also seems to have been some concerns among the Chinese leadership, in connection with its association with Myanmar. As the leadership in Beijing is fully aware of the fact that a further tightening of sanctions by the West, especially by the United States, on Myanmar would be against the interests of China, it has begun to persuade and to press the regime in Yangon to move on with political reforms.

It also appears that the Myanmar leadership has taken seriously the advice of Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir. Observers in Myanmar believe that the sacking of two top generals in late 2001 was closely related to complaints made by Mahathir to Senior General Than Shwe during his visit to Malaysia in September 2001. Mahathir reportedly told Shwe to clean up house and to create a better business climate for foreign investment. Some analysts also believe that Mahathir told Shwe of the need to go ahead with promised political reforms. Mahathir's role was revealed by Razali when Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest. Razali said: "Most certainly, Dr Mahathir has contributed to this happy event today [the release of Aung San Suu Kyi] and he continues to be very much involved. This is what I mean by constructive engagement, without the fanfare, lights and headlines, quietly advising the people. That's what Dr Mahathir has done."[37] ASEAN as a whole has also played an important part in this process of national reconciliation. It appears that the other ASEAN states' steadfast support of Myanmar in the face of Western criticism and sanctions have made the Myanmar leaders feel *ah-nar-hmu* (guilty). It can be argued that the Myanmar Government no longer wants to be a continuing embarrassment to ASEAN, of which it has been a member since 1997. It is most likely that, in a way of showing its appreciation to ASEAN, the Myanmar leadership is committed to the national reconciliation process and political reform in Myanmar.

There are some reports that Myanmar is heading towards socio-economic disaster. Skyrocketing prices of consumer goods, the scarcity of some essentials, such as cooking oil,[38] and the shortage of foreign exchange reserves has led some analysts to predict that major social

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unrest is a strong possibility. However, there are others who argue that if the regime does not care for economic development, it can go back to its autarkic economic policy and remain in power through the use of the instruments of violence and suppression. However, they believe that it will not be the course the present regime wants to embark on. Perhaps, "their love of the nation" would prevent the SPDC leaders from going backwards and leaving "the nation at the beck and call of others".[39] In this context, the government will continue to engage in dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi and to proceed with national reconciliation and political transition. Although it was declared that Suu Kyi's release from house arrest was unconditional, she would most likely be prevented from engaging in any activity that could harm the reconciliation process.

There are also some other factors that are conducive to the process of national reconciliation in Myanmar. Suu Kyi appears to understand the rules of the game and tries to play by those rules. She complies with the regime's request for secrecy, and she has managed to convince the SPDC regime that she is acting on her own and not receiving instructions from any foreign party. In the past, the regime used to see her close association with diplomats and delegations from Western countries as evidence of her being a tool of the West. Moreover, in recent years, major Western governments, including those from the European Union (EU), have softened their criticism of Myanmar. In fact, there is less pressure and fewer lectures from the West, which were usually seen by the regime in Yangon as foreign interference in its internal affairs. This change establishes favourable conditions for the regime to continue with the national reconciliation process. Previously, Western pressure usually elicited negative reactions from a Myanmar leadership instilled with a strong siege mentality. Japan has also welcomed the progress of the national reconciliation process in Myanmar and rewarded the government by resuming developmental assistance. That move will further serve to encourage the Myanmar Government to accelerate the current nascent political openness.

Conclusion

Although the process of national reconciliation is likely to be excruciatingly slow to some people, it seems that the Myanmar Government has been taking careful and steady steps to ensure success in the process. Both the government and the opposition seem to have arrived at a general agreement on the terms and conditions for future engagement in order to avoid going back to a vicious cycle of mistrust

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and suspicion. The Myanmar Government appears to want Aung San Suu Kyi to play a role beyond "party politics". Her release from house arrest is just one step in the process of national reconciliation; many more steps need to be taken. In this regard, both sides have to be cautious not to jeopardize the already established trust and confidence. Moreover, in the view of the government, if the whole process is to be successful, it is necessary to prevent foreign interference.

It is important to understand that there are more significant things than just the release of Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest in the process of Myanmar's national reconciliation. Democracy will come to Myanmar eventually. Perhaps it has to begin with a process of liberalization rather than democratization. What is really needed is to leave the matter to the two parties engaged in the dialogue. As long as both parties — the government and the opposition — are satisfied with what they have achieved, the international community should be prepared to accept that situation.[40] Finding solutions to Myanmar's problems should be left to Myanmar and the Myanmar people themselves, and it should be done in a traditional Myanmar way.

NOTES

1. Myanmar Information Committee, *Information Sheet No. C-2200 (I/L)* – 6 May 2002.
2. Ibid.
3. CNN News, 6 May 2002 (11:00 GMT).
4. BBC News, 6 May 2002 (06:44 GMT).
5. *Asiaweek*, 8 January 1999.
6. Roger Mitton, "Sending Out Feelers", *Asiaweek*, 13 January 2000, p. 30.
7. A total of 258 prisoners were released by the end of April 2002.
8. *Myanmar Times* (Myanmar version) 2, no. 24 (31 August–6 September 2001): 1.
9. "Myanmar's Advance?" Editorial, *Straits Times* (Singapore), 22 November 2001, p. 20.
10. *Star* (Malaysia), 29 November 2001.
11. *Asiaweek*, 16 November 2001, p. 11.
12. Thet Khaing, "Success 'Imminent in Talks'", *Myanmar Times* 6, no. 103 (18–24 February 2002): 1.
13. Wassana Nanuam, "Junta Working Hard Toward Reconciliation", *Bangkok Post*, 6 September 2001, p. 3.
14. CNN News, 31 January 2002.
15. Edward Tang, "Arrests Show Myanmar Fed Up With Abuse by Ne Win Family", *Straits Times* (Singapore), 13 March 2002, p. A5.
16. Mark Baker, "Burma Inches Towards Democracy as Suu Kyi and Military Haggle", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 March 2001, p. 10.
17. Document dated 17 July and 27 July 2001.
18. Australian Broadcasting Corporation (Australia), 22 April 2002.

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19. United Nations, 16 April 2002, on-line edition.
20. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 29 April 2002, p. A6.
21. See Andrew Marshall, *Time for Myanmar's General to Bite the Bullet*, ABC News.com, 20 April 2002.
22. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 30 April 2002, p. 12.
23. Thiri, "The NLD that Deviates from the Course of National Politics", *New Light of Myanmar*, 27 July 1999, p. 5.
24. The military will have a quarter of all seats reserved for it in both houses of the Union Parliament. The president must be experienced in political, military, administrative and economic affairs. The control of three security portfolios within the executive branch (defence, internal affairs, and border areas) are to be given to the military or persons designated by the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the Armed Forces. The military will enjoy complete autonomy, with its C-in-C designated as the supreme commander (including police and reserve forces.) The C-in-C will determine and assign military officers to "leading bodies" of self-administered areas. There will be a constitutional provision for the supreme commander to assume state power in case of an emergency which causes disintegration of the union and national solidarity as well as the loss of national sovereignty.
25. The four political objectives are: stability of the state, community peace and tranquility, prevalence of law and order; national reconsolidation; emergence of a new enduring state constitution; and building of a new, modern developed nation in accord with the new state constitution. The four economic objectives are: development of agriculture as the base, and all round development of other sectors of the economy as well; proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system; development of the economy by inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad; and the initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the state and the people. The four social objectives are: to uplift the morale and morality of the entire nation; to uplift the national prestige and integrity, and the preservation and safeguarding of the cultural heritage and national character; to uplift the dynamism of a patriotic spirit; and to uplift the health, fitness, and education standards of the entire nation.
26. From time to time, Myanmar media refers to Mrs. Albright as "*Mein-ma-gyan-gyi*" (battle-axe).
27. AFP News, 27 January 2001.
28. BBC News, 10 January 2001.
29. *Star Online* (Malaysia), 7 May 2002.
30. *Star Online* (Malaysia), 7 May 2002.
31. *New Light of Myanmar*, 20 February 2002, Supplement.
32. Ibid.
33. It is interesting to note that in October 1958, the *Tatmadaw* (Myanmar armed forces) declared "The National Ideology and Our Pledge", which was heavily influenced by socialist ideology. Perhaps what is more interesting is that Senior General Than Shwe was a junior officer at the Army's Education and Psychological Warfare Department, which was responsible for drafting the declaration.
34. Myanmar's Advance? Editorial, *Straits Times* (Singapore), 22 November 2001, p. 20.
35. In the 1970s, there was a position known as Executive Officer (XO) in the Light Infantry Division (LID). The Myanmar term for the LID's XO was *Tatma Nhyinaing Kutkaeyehmu*. The position was later renamed as General Staff Officer – Grade I.

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36. For example, in early February 2002, soon after he came back from a tour in Sagaing Division, Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt donated a computer set to the primary school in Major General Thura Shwe Man's native village (Myawaddy Television). Moreover, Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt reportedly told senior civil servants to look into and fulfill the needs of Major General Thura Shwe Man's native village.
37. *Star Online* (Malaysia), 7 May 2002.
38. In major cities, there are long queues for state-subsidized cooking oil and other essential products, such as soap bars.
39. Senior General Than Shwe's address at the USDA Special Meeting on 19 February 2002.
40. What I mean is that pressure is already present and instead of saying "if you don't do this we will punish you", it should be "if you do this, we will reward you".

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Malaysia–Singapore Relations: Retrospect and Prospect

K. S. NATHAN

This article examines the historical foundations, key determinants and political economy of Malaysia–Singapore relations, and evaluates the significance of major issues in bilateral relations in recent times, namely, (a) water, (b) the location of immigration checkpoints, (c) the development of Malayan Railway land, (d) the use of Malaysian airspace by the Singapore Air Force, and (e) the repatriation from Singapore of pension funds of Malaysian employees. All of the above, as well as other issues, suggest that the bilateral relationship is characterized by both functional tension and co-operation. The article argues that the best methodological approach to analysing the progress of Malaysia–Singapore ties is offered by political realism which emphasizes self-help and prioritizes national political, economic, and security interests as the goals of foreign policy.

Introduction

This article on Malaysia–Singapore bilateral relations proceeds on the assumption that the key issues involved are better analysed and evaluated within the framework of political realism. Indeed, Sheldon Simon, an American specialist on Southeast Asia, offers a pertinent observation: "Realism (or self-help) will continue as an important analytical framework for understanding Southeast Asian security because individual states still have unresolved conflicts with each other and because no consensus exists whether external threats to regional order exist or who they may be."[1]

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Foreign policies pursued essentially within a state-centric framework tend to endorse the realist paradigm, while efforts to build regional political, economic, and security institutions for mutual gain, although at an incipient stage, also suggest that neo-liberalist tendencies coexist with the realist approach to national security and regional advancement.[2] This co-existence of apparently divergent political perspectives — the former stressing politics as a zero-sum game and the latter focusing more on state capabilities and potential to achieve security and prosperity through co-operation rather than conflict — tends to better explain the dynamics of Malaysia–Singapore relations. The foreign policy interests, strategies, and expected outcomes of the two neighbours, and especially for the island-republic since its independence in 1965, reflect an appreciation based on power considerations as, in this anarchic world, the best and historically proven approach has been self-help. As Michael Leifer has observed: "The rhetoric of government [in Singapore] registers a belief in the premises of the realist paradigm in International Relations, whereby states are obliged to fend for themselves as best they can in an ungoverned and hostile world."[3] While international institutions and diplomacy do provide some measure of comfort, they are secondary instruments to policies and capabilities designed to ensure national security and survival. Indeed, in this context, it is useful to depart from traditional Morgenthau-oriented realism with its emphasis on individual actors, and consider also the impact of system and structure on state behaviour as argued by neo-realists. Members of this latter school maintain that the international system has a precisely defined structure with three important characteristics: (1) the ordering principle of the system, which is anarchic as opposed to hierarchic as in domestic systems; (2) the identical character of units in the system, that is, all states are made functionally similar by the constraints of structure, thereby compelling states to pursue security first before they can perform other functions; and (3) although states are functionally similar, they differ vastly in their capabilities, hence the concept of "superpowers", "major powers", "middle powers", and "small powers".[4]

Given its geopolitical size and location, Singapore's survival strategy tends to focus on a very strong and robust deterrence to any threats arising from what it sees as a Malay/Muslim world in its midst. Thus, analysts of Singapore's foreign policy have tended to use criteria that are more appropriate to the realist paradigm of international politics with its focus on elements of national power. For instance, N. Ganesan explicates Singapore's "foreign policy terrain" in terms of four major constraints: (1) vulnerability and the sovereignty principle, (2) demography, (3) strategic location, and (4) resource base — all of which arguably constitute explicit or implicit inputs into the foreign

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policy formulation process of any government in Singapore, past, present and future.[5] To be sure, these criteria are equally relevant to Malaysian foreign policy formulation, but with the exception that while Singapore's quest for survival identifies its immediate "Malay" neighbours as threats, Malaysia predicates its survival and advancement in broader balance-of-power terms. In other words, while Singapore might fear being swallowed up one day by Malaysia, the same logic does not apply in reverse. For Malaysia, the logic of political realism dictates that while Singapore might be an irritant from time to time, economic interdependency and broader regional/global interests, which are of greater concern to Malaysia, require that problematic issues in bilateral relations be downplayed and managed to mutual benefit. Although Malaysia is committed to good neighbourly relations with its ASEAN neighbour, it can be argued that the Malay-dominant state has not quite come to terms with the loss of Malay power to what it considers to be the only sovereign state (historically known as Temasek) in the Malay archipelago and Southeast Asia controlled solely by a relatively recent wave of Chinese immigrants. This Malay perception of a Chinese-dominant Singapore can be surmized in reverse from former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's own comment, that Singapore is the only place in Southeast Asia where the overseas Chinese can hold their heads high.[6] This dichotomy in world-view and political ideology is reflected by Malaysia's advocacy of *bumiputeraism* (that is, special preferences for the proclaimed indigenous Malay community) as opposed to Singapore's propagation of meritocracy and multi-racialism. Arguably, the political economy of these two ideologies tends to be diametrically opposed to the conduct of cordial relations on a sustained basis, resulting in sometimes occasional as well as frequent hiccups in the bilateral relationship.

The UMNO (United Malays National Organization) ideology of *bumiputeraism*, emphasizing state patronage, protection, and privileges for "indigenous" people, would arguably find favour with the nearly 14 per cent of the Singapore population who are Malay, while the PAP (People's Action Party) ideology focusing on meritocracy would arguably be well received by the approximately 27 per cent of Malaysia's population who are Chinese. Nevertheless, political pragmatism on both sides has prevailed during the last thirty-seven years to ensure that these irritants are contained for the greater good of mutual economic prosperity and regional stability within the framework of ASEAN. In short, differences over various issues point to the existence of functional tension in Malaysia–Singapore relations — that is, their conflict precludes the prospect of close and cordial relations, but permits the possibility of pursuing a certain level of political, economic, and security

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co-operation for mutual benefit. Their functional tension clearly arises from both the political economy of their relationship, which includes differences in ethnic composition and economic performance, as well as the structural character of regional and global international relations in which the power calculus imposes certain constraints and also creates some opportunities. In this regard, the onset of the Asian financial crisis in July 1997, which triggered an economic downturn in Southeast Asia, did also contribute to the exacerbation of bilateral tensions.

Key Determinants Affecting the Bilateral Relationship

This article proposes to examine the key issues in Malaysia–Singapore bilateral relations, and to evaluate them in terms of the past record, current realities, and future problems and prospects. It proceeds from the assumption that many factors combine to make the Malaysia–Singapore relationship a special as well as "a complicated and delicate one". These factors include: (a) Malaysia's links with the Malay ethnic minority in Singapore, and Singapore's links with the ethnic Chinese minority in Malaysia, (b) the ethnic sensitivities stemming from the pro-Malay policies of a predominantly Malay government in Malaysia and a predominantly Chinese-majority government in Singapore, and (c) the "close economic ties involving both competition and complementarity".[7] According to Chin Kin Wah, there are at least eight major variables determining the character, content, substance, and style of bilateral relations prevailing at any given time. These may be summarized as follows:

- differences in size, geopolitical circumstance, and racial arithmetic;
- geographical proximity of the two causeway neighbours whose security concerns are so closely linked through security interdependence that the two states constitute a security complex;
- a very high level of economic interdependence so as to make their economic, security, and prosperity indivisible;
- historical, ethnic, cultural, and familial ties;
- differences in political systems and the management of ideology stemming from differences in racial composition and political agendas between the two societies;
- the obvious linkage between domestic politics (or politiking) and foreign policy;
- the two countries' relatively new experience with the nation-building process, and their sensitivity to issues of national sovereignty; and
- the reality and inevitability of external as well as extra-regional influences on both societies as a result of growing interdependence and, of late, globalization.[8]

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All these eight factors emphasize both the role and consequences of unit-level interactions and the constraints and opportunities arising from the systemic structure of international politics.

It is argued that, for the purposes of this article, the trends, progress, frictions, and salience in the Malaysia–Singapore relationship can be evaluated on the basis of three criteria: (a) the historical factor in bilateral relations, (b) the political economy of the relationship, and (c) the key bilateral issues animating the relationship, namely, water, the development of Malayan Railway land, pension fund withdrawals by Peninsular Malaysians from Singapore, use of Malaysian airspace by the Singapore Air Force, and the relocation of immigration checkpoints.

The Historical Factor in Malaysia–Singapore Relations

History operates to provide perspective, continuity, and appreciation of past trends that condition current thinking, performance, and future behaviour. Indeed, it is this historical factor that binds these two nations together, and yet injects differential approaches to problem-solving within a national as well as regional context. Malaysia began its existence as an independent sovereign state, first as Malaya in 1957, then as Malaysia (incorporating Peninsular Malaya, the island-state of Singapore, and the Borneo territories of Sabah and Sarawak) in 1963. The critical as well as strategic role played by UMNO in shaping Malayan nationalism, upholding Malay rights, and opposing the British-sponsored Malayan Union is central to the understanding of politics between the two countries. Indeed, UMNO's role should be viewed in the context of a general nationalist struggle in the 1940s and 1950s towards self-rule and independence, and subsequently for the promotion of Malay racial dignity and economic upliftment. On the Singapore side, the PAP played an equally critical role in preparing Singaporeans for independence through merger, and later managing the separation from Malaysia without political, economic, and social disintegration of the city-state.

The merger programme including Singapore in the new federation ended with the creation of an independent Republic of Singapore, following separation from the Malaysian Federation on 9 August 1965. If history does provide any insights into understanding the strains in post-separation bilateral relations, the island-republic's two-year membership of the Federation of Malaysia had at best been most problematic for Kuala Lumpur. The PAP government was able to exact constitutional concessions from a grudging Federal Government led by Tunku Abdul Rahman prior to merger, in three distinct areas: (a) minority representation (3 out of 7 seats) in the Internal Security

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Council; (b) Singapore's admission to the intergovernmental committee which enabled joint British-Singaporean consultations on foreign policy and defence — a federal prerogative which Kuala Lumpur viewed as an "usurpation" by Singapore; and (c) Singapore's finance ministry autonomy regarding technical assistance programmes and its participation at international economic meetings, which clearly had foreign policy implications.[9] To make matters worse, Lee Kuan Yew alone claimed the right to use the title "Premier of Singapore" whilst his other colleagues in the various states of the Federation were merely "Chief Ministers".

This relatively recent historical past, punctuated as it was by unpleasant episodes in the process of adjustment to a new political association, invariably produced convergent and divergent perceptions and perspectives regarding how each society viewed the other. Almost four decades on, it is evident that the models of management and development pursued by the two countries have differed in ideology, emphasis, and socio-political orientation to render a rather distinctive character to national development on both sides of the causeway that link the two countries.

To be sure, their history informs that their security is indivisible, yet national security objectives, strategies, and priorities have evolved along different lines. Historically, Singapore was a major entréport, and has evolved into a major financial and services centre today. Ethnically, the Malays have been the dominant population in Peninsular Malaysia, politically and numerically, while the Chinese have been the majority population in Singapore. British colonial policy integrated Singapore with the other two Straits Settlements of Malacca and Penang located in Malaya. This earlier history acquires significance when viewed in the context of the upswings and downswings that tend to recur in the bilateral relationship. Among the various elements, the ideological-philosophical-ethnic overtones encompassed by the slogans "Malaysian Malaysia" and "*bumiputeraism*" appears to have dominated the debate over the ideal paradigm of governance in the two societies.

Malaysian Malaysia

The concept of a Malaysian Malaysia has always underpinned the developmental approach of Singapore's PAP in its strategy of building a united Malaysian nation comprising all ethnic groups on the basis of equality. For Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, an egalitarian approach in the long run would ultimately produce the desired result of a dynamic and progressive nation in which all communities can move up the socio-economic ladder. Constitutional provisions to help the needy and disadvantaged Malaysians regardless of ethnicity could have been drafted

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to ensure socio-economic equity, and curb the domination of advantaged groups at the time of independence. Such upward mobility based on economic rather than ethnic criteria is more likely to produce a stable, democratic, united and progressive society in the long run. The concept of a Malaysian Malaysia had been hotly debated in the Malaysian Federal Parliament, and in other fora on both sides of the causeway prior to Singapore's separation from the Malaysian Federation. At the Malaysian Solidarity Convention rally held in Singapore on 6 June 1965 — that is, only two months prior to the island-republic's expulsion from the Federation — Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Toh Chin Chye outlined the agenda for a Malaysian Malaysia in the presence of the leaders of five political parties in Malaya, Singapore, and Sarawak:

> This convention is embarked on a crusade to preach interracial unity, to propagate the basic rights of all races which form our multiracial society. The force that will unite all our races into a Malaysian Malaysia is more than language, more than external aggression. Experience has shown that in similar countries, a united nation can only arise if one race does not aspire to be the master race but instead all citizens are equal irrespective of his race.[10]

Bumiputeraism as UMNO's Counter-strategy

In sharp contrast to the PAP approach to Malaysian unity, the UMNO-led Alliance Party tended to emphasize an approach based on Malay ownership of the country, ethnicity, socio-economic upliftment of the Malays, special preferences for the "indigenous", meaning *bumiputra*, community, that is, the Malays — all of which may be subsumed under the rubric of *ketuanan Melayu*, or Malay supremacy in Malaysia. UMNO's anxieties *vis-à-vis* the ethnic Chinese in Malaya and Singapore were heightened by the visibly huge gap in socio-economic status of the Malays, which could only be redressed by a policy of positive discrimination, or what may be termed "affirmative action". In short, Malay dominance in the political sphere must now be harnessed to redress the economic imbalance *vis-à-vis* the non-Malays, particularly the Chinese who are generally perceived by the Malays to be aggressive, acquisitive, and insensitive to the local cultural milieu in which they are a part. The rabid anti-Chinese tone of ultra-Malays such as Syed Jaafar Albar in the 1960s, largely directed at the PAP and Lee Kuan Yew, was indicative of the general Malay political sentiment and insecurity, exacerbated as it was by the expansion of the Chinese population in Malaysia through merger with Singapore. Malay insecurity and inferiority, compared with Chinese prosperity and superiority — at least in the realm of mutual perceptions of each other, rightly or wrongly — undergirded much of the debate regarding the merits and

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demerits of a Malaysian Malaysia. The Malay, for historical, political, and cultural reasons, did not wish to become a second-class citizen in his own country. Hence, UMNO strongly believed (and continues to believe) in shaping a political economy based on discrimination as the basis of stability. Since the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1970, the Malay-dominant government has consciously encouraged the growth of a Malay middle class, even at the expense of non-Malay interests. With an economic policy designed to challenge, if not reduce Chinese dominance in certain sectors of the economy, such as trade, finance, and construction, the impact on the non-Malays has generally been negative and disintegrative. Gordon Means aptly notes that the NEP, which "was designed to reduce the salience of ethnicity and create a harmonious and integrated society in the future appears to have as its major consequence the perpetuation of ethnic divisions in law, in institutions, and in public policy".[11]

The impact of such policies on ethnic perceptions in neighbouring Singapore could hardly be missed. Singapore's perception of the discrimination by the Malays of the ethnic Chinese minority in Malaysia would only reinforce its determination to pursue offensive as well as defensive policies to mitigate such discrimination. Thus, the avoidance of communal violence in Malaysia becomes an important element of its national interests *vis-à-vis* Malaysia. Another observer has gone even further to suggest that "it may not be far-fetched to argue that Singapore's defence strategy is one factor encouraging the Malaysian authorities to restrict the scope of open debate concerning the political, economic, and social position of Malaysia's non-Malay communities".[12]

The PAP, on the other hand, has always maintained — given the advantaged position of a majority Chinese population (nearly 77 per cent) whose socio-economic level was much higher than the Malay and Indian minorities — that the principles of equality and non-discrimination on the basis of ethnicity should serve as the governing principles for building a united, prosperous, and peaceful multiracial Malaysia.

The Political Economy of Bilateral Relations

The political dimensions of economic activity in the international sphere are now subsumed under the subject of international political economy (IPE) — an area of investigation that has become a vital if not critical component in the study of international relations as a discipline. Malaysia has a population of 23 million spread over 329,749 square kilometres of territory covering Peninsular Malaysia and the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak. In stark comparison, Singapore

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is an island-state, more correctly a city-state occupying an area of about 683 square kilometres, and with a population of some 4 million people. Both territorial size and population pressure in Singapore provide crucial inputs into bilateral relations. Malaysia has the history, space, time and territory to develop its resources, whereas the island-state must feel the constant pressure of performing to stay ahead in order to safeguard national survival. Whilst Malaysia is abundant in natural resources, Singapore has to survive largely on the ingenuity of its human capital. Heavy dependence on the external economic environment and consequently on foreign investment, proof of performance, and capacity to maintain its status as a first-world economy cumulatively impose a high premium on internal political and social stability for the island-republic — with consequences for a type of regime and style of governance most suited to achieving those goals. As noted by one writer, "dependence on foreign investment also increases the need of the government to control and modify many aspects of social and economic life and behaviour in order to ensure a continued favourable climate for investors".[13] The PAP government which has now been in power for forty-three years (1959–2002), has established an indisputable record of political stability and economic growth, and has been committed to rooting-out corruption to boost efficiency and economy at all levels. The multiracial and meritocratic philosophy of the PAP stems from the doctrinal assumption that racism breeds corruption — hence, the conflict of perspective and philosophy with Malaysia's model of preferential rights and racial discrimination in favour of the 55 per cent Malay population. The PAP would maintain that its multiracial ideology is conducive to the emergence of a united, non-racial and egalitarian society, whereas UMNO's bifurcation of Malaysian society into two artificial, politically and racially-motivated categories of "*bumiputra*" and "*non-bumiputra*" ultimately deepens ethnic divisions and is not conducive to the emergence of a Malaysian Malaysia.

Whatever might be the rationale for justifying a regime type in either country, the point must be made that one needs to "cut one's coat according to one's cloth". There is no magic formula to governance that would produce a result based on fairness, justice, and equality for all citizens. To be sure, history, culture, ethnicity, social values, ideology, levels of development, and the leadership's political commitment, are all factors that shape the emergence of a regime type that is appropriate to a given society, as is the case with Malaysia and Singapore.

Singapore's resource scarcity is immediately revealed by its dependence on water supply from Malaysia — an issue that surfaces whenever strains develop in bilateral relations. Yet, Singapore's

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economic productivity impacts upon Malaysian economic growth, especially *vis-à-vis* the southern state of Johor, separated from the island republic by a mere half-kilometre-long causeway. Rising levels of economic interdependence and the economic as well as political spinoffs in terms of enhanced governmental capacity to realize social expectations can only be ignored at one's own peril. Strong economic relationships and partnerships across the causeway, built over the decades, are difficult to unhinge, given scheduled commitments to meet productivity deadlines. The sound economic basis of inter-dependence enables the political rhetoric to operate at a certain superficial level to accommodate the political contingencies of incumbent leaderships. It is, therefore, not surprising that election time in Malaysia is paralleled by bilateral spats with Singapore. Volatility in Malaysian politics is certainly greater compared with Singapore's fairly monolithic political structure. Malaysia is politically a more complex society, with the government playing the role of intermediary in ethnic relations, dispenser of largesse to mollify political disaffection as well as reward political loyalty, custodian of correct Islamic thinking and practice in a multi-religious society, and suppressor of all forms of societal activity deemed to be extremist or threatening to national security.

In the economic sphere, such mutual dependence does invariably shape political realities and options for both parties. To what extent does competition and complementarity shape political outcomes? Trade statistics underscore the importance of Malaysia and Singapore as each other's trading partner. Two-way trade in 1999 exceeded US$28 billion, representing over 17 per cent of total trade. Malaysia accounts for over 20 per cent of Singapore's exports, while Singapore takes over 40 per cent of Malaysian exports, mostly for re-export. The direction of trade of these two countries points to a strong dependence on export markets in the United States, Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Germany, and the United Kingdom. These countries, together with Taiwan, are major foreign investors in Malaysia, Singapore, and some other ASEAN countries as well.

The trade structure of both Malaysia and Singapore serve as political impetus for the formulation of economic policies favourable to foreign investment. Thus, the national economic plans provide a clue to the political economy of the bilateral relationship — tending towards both competition and complementarity. Examining the thrust of the two countries' development plans over the next twenty to thirty years enables one to guage national economic, political, social, and strategic priorities on both sides of the causeway. Malaysia under the leadership of Prime Minister Mahathir (since 1981) has embarked on Vision 2020,

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a major enterprise to: (a) renovate the economy along more rational market-based principles; (b) industrialize the country to keep pace with international competition; and (c) develop all the necessary skills that would enable Malaysia to cope with the information revolution, and to manage both the positive and negative sides of globalization in the twenty-first century. These new goals and priorities result also from the expiry of the twenty-year New Economic Policy (1970–90) specifically aimed at uplifting the socio-economic status and welfare of the Malay or *bumiputra* population. The apparent success of socio-economic restructuring, given that the system had not broken down despite preferential and discriminatory policies in favour of Muslim/Malays, has provided the foundation for a more enterprising approach to create a *bangsa Malaysia*, or a Malaysian nation, in which policies are driven more by need than by ethnicity. The policies are designed to create greater synergies or interdependence among the various ethnic groups in Malaysia — which in turn would strengthen the current political framework of Malay dominance — an apparent contradiction in terms. Indeed, the concepts of *bangsa Malaysia* and *ketuanan Melayu*, or Malay supremacy, are directly in conflict with the philosophy of Vision 2020. To be sure, Vision 2020 is premised on expanding *bumiputra* dominance of the political economy of Malaysia in which the other ethnic groups would at best remain second or third-class citizens of this multiracial nation. However, such contradictions become obfuscated by economic prosperity — that is, the government's ability to deliver on the economic front even if some are getting more than others. Feelings of relative deprivation can be skilfully manipulated by the government to confer disproportionate benefits to a certain segment of the population. In the Malaysian context, Malaysian security and Malay ethnic security are virtually inseparable.[14] This conception of security contributes an additional source of tension in relations with Singapore which emphasizes meritocracy to energize its political economy, and tends to view national security as more a product of international rather than local dynamics.

Malaysia's major goal in the next thirty years is to reduce the heavy dependence on Singapore as a re-export centre for Malaysian goods. This necessarily entails upgrading the country's technological and industrial base, its sea-ports and airports, educational infrastructure, transportation networks, and transforming the commodity composition of bilateral ties (with Singapore) and international trade from low to high value-added, especially manufactured goods and electrical and electronic products. Another major area of transformation lies in the structure of Malaysian overseas investments, including Singapore — from the real estate sector to the financial and business sectors and

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capital-intensive manufacturing industries. Singapore has traditionally been a major financial and services hub for the Asia-Pacific region. The creation of Labuan as an Offshore Financial Centre (OFC) in 1993 was designed to increase Malaysia's capacity to provide financial services to a region that is growing in economic dynamism — a measure that could undercut Singapore's regional predominance in this sphere.

Singapore's national development strategy has always been underpinned by the need to stay ahead of competitors as the best method of survival. Singapore's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), covering a forty-year period from 1991 to 2030, is directed towards achieving developed country status and, by extension, to create a "first-world economy". The target for Singapore is to catch up with the Netherlands by 2020 and the United States by 2030. The eightfold objectives of the SEP are to:

1. enhance human resources,
2. promote national teamwork,
3. become internationally oriented,
4. create a conducive climate for innovation,
5. develop manufacturing and service clusters in line with an industrial strategy,
6. spearhead economic development as part of an industrial strategy,
7. maintain international competitiveness to promote economic resilience, and
8. reduce vulnerability as an integral element of economic resilience.[15]

In comparing the national development objectives of both countries, one notices a basic similar thrust in the economic field — hence the element of competition stemming from the quest for the same pool of foreign investments, and from the ability by both countries to provide similar services to that portion of the international economy that is engaged in Southeast Asia. Competition and complementarity thus provide the backdrop to bilateral problems that emerge from time to time, or which perpetuate strains because of their non-resolution. However, the significance of political will in resolving problems is evidenced by the agreements in-principle reached by both sides during Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's visit to Malaysia in September 2001. To these issues we now turn.

Key Bilateral Issues and Efforts Towards Final Resolution

Water

Singapore suffers from a major resource scarcity: water. Assured water supply at certain levels for a lengthy period of time from Singapore's

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closest hinterland — Johor in Malaysia — has invariably become an increasingly contentious issue in relations with Malaysia. Perceptual as well as substantive differences have already emerged regarding the type and quantity of water to be supplied to Singapore — whether raw or treated. As Malaysia's industrial capacity expands, the rationale to supply raw water to Singapore and purchase back treated water at a higher price would be more difficult to sustain. Competitive industrialization on both sides of the causeway is but one factor explaining the difference of approach by the two governments.

The Malaysian proposal to supply only treated water to Singapore after the 1961 and 1962 agreements expire in 2011 and 2061 respectively, takes into account Malaysia's own expanded requirements of water usage based on a growing population, and the need to achieve a balance between commercial and private consumption. Currently, Malaysia sells raw water to Singapore at 3 sen per 1,000 gallons (3,785.3 litres, or 4.5461 cubic metres), and buys treated water from the republic at 50 sen per 1,000 gallons or 4.5461 cubic metres.[16] The agreements provide for review of the price structure after a twenty-five-year period. Hence, since the mid-1980s, the water issue has resurfaced, and become politically emotive, especially on the Malaysian side as to whether Kuala Lumpur was getting a fair price for the sale of raw water to, and purchase of purified water from, Singapore. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir unequivocally stated that change is the order of the day with respect to the water issue. The present water agreement was drawn up during colonial times by the British specifically to favour Singapore. It does not reflect Malaysia's national interests as an independent nation. In Mahathir's view, "it simply does not make sense for Singapore to take our money and pay us back three sen. It makes good sense for Malaysia to supply Singapore with treated water when the present agreement ends". However, at the moment, if Malaysia raises the price of raw water above the 3 sen level, Singapore could also legitimately raise the cost of treated water above the current rate of 50 sen per 1,000 gallons.

The island-republic's perspective is quite naturally informed by its role as a global city-state whose access to vital natural resources must be guaranteed to enable it to function as an international port and service centre. As one of Singapore's opposition Members of Parliament pointedly remarked in response to demands by some Malaysian politicians to stop the supply of water to Singapore: "This issue is very serious. I mean, it is not a case of sacrificing an opportunity to bathe ourselves. It's our lifeblood. It's like declaring war on Singapore if they cut off water."[17] Singapore clearly dismisses the Malaysian Government's perception that it is profiteering from the sale of treated water to Johor,

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arguing that it costs the republic RM2.40 to treat 1,000 gallons of water which it sells to Johor at 50 sen per 1,000 gallons. The republic is already feeling the pressure of securing additional water supplies well before the 2061 cut-off point. Under an agreement with Johor, Singapore draws about 1.527 billion litres of raw water daily, or less than 40 per cent of Singapore's daily requirements.

Awareness on both sides has grown substantially — that the water problem, if left unresolved, would almost certainly complicate other bilateral issues so that any long-term resolution would require a settlement on the basis of a comprehensive package covering other contentious issues and irritants in the bilateral relationship. To this end, Senior Minister Lee made two visits to Kuala Lumpur — in August 2000 and again in September 2001. The latter visit was evidently undertaken with greater urgency, stemming from Lee's perception of future trends in Malaysian politics carrying the prospect, even if remote at this stage, of an Islamic-oriented government taking control of federal power in a future election. It was Lee's considered assessment that a more stable and fair deal could be struck with the UMNO-led government of Prime Minister Mahathir than with a future theocratic government whose national and international priorities could be radically different, thus rendering the relationship with Singapore more "problematic".[18] He also expressed the concern that a future government in Kuala Lumpur that is more favourably disposed towards growing Islamic militancy "will not deliver".[19] Lee also took the view that it was his personal responsibility as Singapore's first prime minister to reach some form of finality on the matter of the water issue with a Malaysian leader with whom he had become acquainted since 1965 prior to Singapore's separation from Malaysia. Settling the water issue as part of a comprehensive package would help prevent the burdens of the past revisiting successor governments on both sides of the causeway while enabling them to adopt a more constructive and perhaps less emotional approach to fostering good bilateral relations, both in the spirit of ASEAN and in the context of globalization. On Malaysia's part, Prime Minister Mahathir has always maintained that the water issue must be resolved together with other outstanding bilateral issues as a comprehensive package — an approach reflecting convergence of national interests between the two neighbours.

The skeletal agreement signed on 4 September 2001 in Kuala Lumpur guarantees Malaysian supply of water beyond 2061 (upon expiry of the 1962 agreement) — at 1.33 billion litres per day compared with Singapore's request for 2.85 billion litres a day. However, the price of water would increase fifteenfold in the near future, costing Singapore an additional RM45 million each year. Malaysia, however,

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has asked for 60 sen per 1,000 gallons. Beyond 2061, Malaysia has offered to supply 350 million gallons a day, although this is less than the 750 million gallons per day requested by Lee. Singapore agreed to the lower figure although the ratio of raw water to treated water has yet to be finalized. Prime Minister Mahathir has offered 100 million gallons per day of raw water and 250 million gallons of filtered water. However, Lee's request is for 150 million gallons of raw water and 200 million gallons of treated water, which would be supplied by a joint venture between Johor and the Public Utilities Board (PUB) of Singapore. The 1990 agreement between Johor and the PUB would serve as a basis for determining the price of filtered water. Raw water would be sold at 60 sen per 1,000 gallons, and would be reviewed every five years.[20] In addition, Singapore is obliged to give Malaysia twelve parcels of land as a "bonus" for guaranteed water supply.

There is little doubt that concerns over Malaysia's shifting political landscape, coupled with economic recession in the republic, provided sufficient incentives for Senior Minister Lee to broker a "less than balanced" agreement in Malaysia's favour as he was convinced that the comprehensive pact was a sufficiently good trade-off for long-term security.[21] Nevertheless, the devil is in the detail, and it would take a good deal of give-and-take by officials on both sides to iron out a durable compromise that reflects confidence for the promotion of mutual interests. The most recent round of discussions over water in Kuala Lumpur in July 2002 has underscored basic differences of approach in resolving this issue, especially in relation to the price mechanism. Malaysia wishes to delink the pricing aspect from other issues in the comprehensive package, while Singapore prefers to resolve all outstanding bilateral issues as a package. Kuala Lumpur has in recent times hinted more than once that the price paid by Singapore for raw water from Johor is too low, pointing to the sale of water by China to Hong Kong at RM6.80 per 1,000 gallons.[22] Singapore holds to the view that any formula to fix the price of water supplied by Malaysia to the republic should apply only to future agreements, and cannot be retrospectively applied to the 1961 and 1962 agreements.[23]

It should also be noted that Singapore has developed a realistic approach to water security by exploring all other options to boost self-sufficiency, especially in times of crisis. To the extent that Singapore succeeds in significantly reducing its dependence on Malaysian supplies, the scope for politicking over water would most certainly be narrowed. Arguably, the pressure on Malaysia would be relaxed and the penchant for Malaysian politicians to manipulate the bilateral relationship to serve narrower political agendas would also cease. Thus, the degree of success of Singapore's water management strategies might prove crucial

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in minimizing the leverage politicians in Malaysia claim to have on the republic. One writer on the subject has argued that the water issue has already been "desecuritized" in the light of Singapore's long-term strategic approach, which includes:

1. optimizing domestic water yields from Singapore's three major reservoirs — Macritchie, Peirce, and Seletar/Bedok,
2. implementing conservation measures through the use of low capacity flushing cisterns, pricing mechanisms, and public education, and
3. developing access to alternative water supplies through recyling waste water, desalination, and sourcing for supplies from neighbouring Indonesia.[24]

On the Malaysian side, Singapore's efforts at water self-sufficiency would not only be welcomed, but also viewed as a positive step towards strengthening all aspects of bilateral relations. Such efforts would also facilitate a more pragmatic and rational approach towards mutually agreed pricing arrangements with respect to the supply of raw water from Malaysia and treated water by either partner.

Malayan Railway (KTM) Land, CIQ, and Tanjong Pagar

In the present world of international relations, characterized as it is by anarchy, each sovereign state survives, defends, and propagates itself on the basis of self-help. It uses the legal notion of political, territorial, and constitutional sovereignty to strengthen its psychological survival as an independent state. Threats to national sovereignty have to be rebuffed, if not challenged, as the core values of sovereign existence need to be defended through whatever means necessary. International law becomes a useful weapon to pursue territorial and sovereignty claims as it provides an empirical basis for security. In this context, the Tanjong Pagar Customs, Immigration, and Quarantine (CIQ) issue, tied as it is to Malaysian ownership of railway land in Singapore, touches on the core issue of national sovereignty, especially for Singapore.

The entire issue should be located in a broader historical context. Malayan Railway land, covering over 217 hectares and stretching 20–30 kilometres into Singapore territory, was acquired under a 1918 colonial ordinance specifically for use by Malayan Railway (Keretapi Tanah Melayu or KTM) for a period of 999 years. That same ordinance limits the use of this land, of which the main railway station is situated on prime land. However, under a separate bilateral arrangement on 27 November 1990, known as the Points of Agreement (POA), Malaysia and Singapore decided to depart from the 1918 Railway Ordinance to facilitate joint redevelopment of the Tanjong Pagar Railway Station and the lands adjacent to the track owned by KTM. Malaysia's subsequent

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reluctance to go ahead with the 1990 agreement was based on the fear that it might eventually be forced to give up proprietary control over some or all of KTM's land in Singapore.[25]

This issue has invariably become linked to the CIQ issue for reasons that remain unclear. Singapore has argued that the two issues are separate: ownership of KTM land as opposed to exercising sovereign rights by another state on Singapore's sovereign territory. Singapore has maintained, using international conventions and legal practice, that any exercise of sovereign rights by Malaysia on Singapore's territory, such as the stamping of passports, can only be done with the sufferance of the Government of Singapore. Since both parties had agreed to move the CIQ facilities to Woodlands, on the northernmost point of the island, commencing 1 August 1998, it was improper of Malaysia to detract from the agreement, as it did in June 1997 by insisting that it would continue to operate at Tanjong Pagar after 1 August. Singapore Foreign Minister S. Jayakumar informed the Singapore Parliament on 31 July 1998 that in a 17 July meeting between officials of both sides, the Malaysian delegation fully understood that the CIQ and POA were separate issues, and hence there was no question of Singapore taking back KTM land merely by relocating its CIQ to Woodlands.[26]

The 1990 POA states that the KTM railway station would be moved either to Bukit Timah first, or directly to Woodlands. In exchange, under the 1990 POA, three parcels of railway land — at Tanjong Pagar, Kranji, and Woodlands — would be jointly developed on a 60–40 basis with the Malaysian Government holding the larger share. However, three years later, Prime Minister Mahathir expressed his displeasure with the POA as it failed to include a piece of railway land in Bukit Timah for joint development.

The September 2001 comprehensive agreement nevertheless helped resolve this thorny issue which provided sufficient latitude to be exploited for political purposes in times of economic or political difficulties. Both governments have reached an understanding on the Malaysian immigration checkpoint on the Kuala Lumpur–Singapore railway line, which is to be moved from Tanjong Pagar to Kranji. The issue over Malayan Railway land — a very sensitive one for Kuala Lumpur — has now been resolved by Singapore's agreement to offer Malaysia another twelve plots of land in Bukit Timah (as mentioned earlier). The linkage between an agreement on water and an agreement on land concessions should not go unnoticed — hence, the need for a package deal as the most realistic as well as constructive approach to bilateral relations.

Singapore also in-principle acceded to Malaysia's demands to build a new bridge to replace the Johor–Singapore causeway, which

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will be destroyed in 2007. Finally, Singapore also agreed to let Malaysia build an underground tunnel (at Malaysia's cost) to link a newly electrified train service to the Kranji station in Singapore.[27]

Central Provident Fund Withdrawals

The withholding of pension funds of Malaysian employees in Peninsular Malaysia by the Singaporean authorities has not helped in reducing bilateral frictions. Malaysia fails to understand why employees from the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak are able to withdraw their Central Provident Fund (CPF) savings upon completing their employment contracts in Singapore whereas those from Peninsular Malaysia are unable to do so under similar circumstances. Singapore prefers to deal with this problem as part of an overall package that would bring about greater stability to bilateral relations. The republic uses the historical factor of long-standing and close links between Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore to justify differential treatment. The current practice allows a peninsular Malaysian to withdraw his CPF savings in full if he is at least 50 years old, and has left permanently to reside in peninsular Malaysia. The same employee is also entitled to withdraw his pension from age 50 onwards, provided he has not worked in Singapore for two years. Malaysian workers from Sabah and Sarawak, as well as other foreigners can withdraw their CPF savings at any time after they leave Singapore. It is estimated that more than 200,000 Malaysians are employed in Singapore.[28] Malaysian workers affected by the Singapore ruling feel that they have been short-changed by the vagaries of "causeway politics", as Singapore has linked the CPF withdrawal issue to the resolution of the other two issues already mentioned: the supply of water and the transfer of the CIQ checkpoint from Tanjong Pagar to Woodlands.[29] To date, more than S$3 billion of peninsular Malaysian employees' pension funds are being withheld by Singapore's CPF Board.

The counter-argument from official sources in Singapore is that Malaysian workers were aware of this ruling upon accepting employment in Singapore prior to 1 August 1995, when the ruling was made that all foreigners including Malaysians working in Singapore were no longer required to contribute to the CPF. Singapore's Minister for Manpower, Lee Boon Yang stated categorically that historical links with Peninsular Malaysia distinguished Malaysian CPF members from other foreign CPF members. Geographic proximity enables many workers to shuttle frequently across the causeway. In fact, "workers from Peninsular Malaysia often return to Singapore to work after a period of absence in Singapore".[30] For this reason, Acting Singapore High Commissioner,

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Chin Hock Seng noted that the withdrawal condition was not a form of discrimination. In view of the fact that Singaporean workers can only withdraw their CPF savings at age 55 whereas peninsular Malaysians can do so at 50, the latter actually enjoy a more liberal withdrawal regime.[31]

In any event, the fact that issues such as the CPF gets intertwined with other more important issues testifies to the high level of sensitivity that exists in a bilateral relationship, especially when it experiences strains. This realization has informed the comprehensive package approach to bilateral dispute resolution during Lee's September 2001 visit to Kuala Lumpur. Singapore has adopted a more conciliatory approach to the CPF issue. Upon achieving an overall package agreement, Singapore would permit peninsular Malaysians to withdraw CPF funds over a period of two years.

Use of Malaysian Airspace by Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) Aircraft

On 18 September 1998, Malaysia formally revoked permission for the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) to use its airspace in southern Johor — a decision which was taken because of worsening relations between the two countries during 1998. As of 18 September 1998, the withdrawal of the use of Malaysian airspace by the RSAF covered five major aspects of hitherto ongoing bilateral military co-operation:

1. withdrawal of the waiver requiring RSAF fixed-wing aircraft based at Payar Lebar Air Base from applying for diplomatic clearance when transiting southern Johor's airspace to and from training areas over the South China Sea;
2. the withdrawal of clearance granted to all types of RSAF aircraft to conduct training within the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Low Flying Area;
3. the termination of the arrangement for the RSAF to conduct navigational training over the airspace of the Peninsula, Sabah, and Sarawak;
4. the termination of combined search and rescue (SAR) operations and exercises, that is, arrangements which were formalized through RMAF and RSAF Combined Search and Rescue Operating Procedures; and
5. that all RSAF aircraft would be prohibited entry into Malaysian airspace after taking off from Tengah Air Base.[32] Henceforth, the RSAF would need to give fourteen days written notice to seek approval from Wisma Putra (Malaysia's Foreign Ministry) to use Malaysian airspace.

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Mutual reactions to the Malaysian decision have been highlighted by the local media in both countries in a manner that has not helped relations. The problem acquired greater salience when a British navy helicopter crashed in the South China Sea during a naval exercise between British and Singapore forces. Singapore blamed the subsequent delay in search and rescue (SAR) operations on Malaysia. Defence Minister Syed Hamid Albar replied by saying that the RSAF was capable of using an alternative route which was only 12 minutes longer to initiate an SAR operation.[33]

The withdrawal by Malaysia of clearance rights to the RSAF coincided with rising concerns over alleged increased airspace intrusions by a neighbour whose military power has expanded significantly over the past decade. The RSAF operates a formidable force of strike, interceptor and support aircraft — evidently the most powerful air force in Southeast Asia. Strategic analysts view the Malaysian decision to effectively close off its airspace to the RSAF as a major setback for Singapore.[34] In this regard, Malaysia has gone a step further to request the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to revert to Malaysia control of airspace in the southern peninsula (stretching from Negeri Sembilan to Johor), which has been handled by Singapore air traffic control since 1965. The fact that Kuala Lumpur was piling the pressure on Singapore only days after Singapore attempted to terminate the Malaysian CIQ checkpoint in Tanjong Pagar was indicative of how a chain reaction could be set in motion in a relationship involving two very close neighbours. Sovereignty in exercising immigration control for one side is as vital as sovereignty in resuming full control of air, sea, and land space for the other. Yet, political will and pragmatism on both sides do enable agreements to be made that circumvent so-called sovereignty-sensitive issues. Mutual concessions in the September 2001 agreement include restoration of Singapore's facility to use Malaysia's military airspace, that is, a return to the access regime for RSAF aircraft prior to the withdrawal decision announced by Malaysia on 18 September 1998.

Conclusion: Malaysia–Singapore Relations: Challenges and Prospects for the New Millennium

Malaysia and Singapore are two relatively new countries which are connected by historical, familial, cultural, political, economic, and strategic ties. Their relationship is characterized by interdependence, with perhaps Singapore relying more heavily on Malaysia for a resource vital to the republic's survival: water. Any successful negotiation leading to mutual benefits with respect to future water supplies from

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Malaysia to Singapore beyond 2061 is bound to affect mutual perceptions on all other outstanding issues that are also targeted for resolution. To be sure, ethnicity is a factor that invariably operates in providing a certain character and dynamic to the relationship. From the days of merger, to separation and beyond, the spectre of ethnicity has been directly if not indirectly raised by both sides during periods of friction. Malaysia is more inclined to take the view that Singapore opts for a rather over-legalistic approach that conveys the impression that the city-state is insensitive to the cultural milieu in which it finds itself. Kuala Lumpur tends to view such an approach as antagonistic and confrontational, and not in keeping with the general consensual approach based on *musjawarah* (deliberation) and *mufakat* (consensus). Singapore, on the other hand, prefers to hold steadfastly to formal commitments that have issued from negotiations as its own survival and prosperity are firmly based on strategic planning to fulfill the aspirations of its citizens and to remain competitive internationally. Singapore's reaction to the Asian financial crisis *vis-à-vis* Malaysia — in terms of the former pushing up interest rates which, in turn, caused an exodus of capital from Malaysia to the republic — was seen as contrary to good neighbourly relations, and contravening the apparent mutual commitment by both leaders (Mahathir and Goh Chok Tong) to the policy of "prosper thy neighbour" as opposed to "beggar thy neighbour".

Singapore, on its part, has since the late 1960s adopted a national strategy of survival based on military and economic strength. The city-state's defence policy and rapid growth of its arms industry are viewed with concern in Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia is aware of the extent of Singapore's military power, especially its air superiority. Nevertheless, Malaysia is less concerned about the military dimension in bilateral ties as Malaysia's national priorities focus more on socio-economic development rather than military power as an index of national strength. This rather relaxed attitude *vis-à-vis* Singapore should perhaps mitigate the security dilemma for the city-state, as Malaysia does not appear to harbour aggressive designs on the republic, considering the fact that the island-state received its independence from Malaysia some thirty-seven years ago.

A final resolution of other, less critical issues, such as the Tanjong Pagar Railway Station, CPF withdrawals, access by Singapore's military aircraft to Malaysian airspace, and the like, would no doubt help to build a more conducive environment for the improvement of bilateral relations. Indeed, the existence of both competition and complementarity, tied as they are to broader issues of national survival and advancement, creates a uniqueness in the bilateral relationship. Issues

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that give rise to occasional friction, tension, and strain, are either neutralized or marginalized by the commitment of both leaderships to improve the material well-being of their own peoples. Thus, it can be argued that the evidence of the past thirty-seven years suggests that this bilateral relationship is characterized by functional tension and co-operation — with the desire and momentum to co-operate taking precedence over perceptual and structural differences. Both leaderships have adopted a pragmatic approach to substantive issues without allowing issues that have a localized political content to scuttle meaningful co-operation. Indeed, it is possible to conclude that the dictates of both realism and neorealism oblige the two causeway neighbours to adopt a pragmatic and business-like approach to bilateral relations.

Ultimately, national interest can only be best advanced when pragmatism supersedes sentimentalism. Trade figures clearly point in this direction: in 1998 alone, Singapore was Malaysia's second largest trading partner after Japan (with the United States in third position), while Malaysia was also Singapore's second largest trading partner after Japan (with the United States also in third place). Current trade and investment statistics further highlight the degree of interdependence between the two countries. Bilateral Malaysia–Singapore trade alone accounts for some 50 per cent of intra-ASEAN trade. In the first half of 2001, there was a staggering 4.8 million day trips into Malaysia from Singapore, double that of the same period in 2000. Additionally, Singapore companies had RM1.2 billion (S$0.6 billion) of manufacturing investments in 149 projects approved in Malaysia in 2001 alone. Moreover, based on Malaysian projections, Singaporeans will contribute half of the tourism dollars that Malaysia hopes to earn in 2002.[35] There is little doubt that the character of bilateral relations reflects ongoing historical, geographic, and cultural ties.

It is in this context that the two countries' involvement in ASEAN, the broader Asia-Pacific region, and globally should be viewed. Both Malaysia and Singapore are committed to membership and development of ASEAN, which protects the sovereignty of individual member-states as well as promotes their individual and collective welfare. ASEAN is valuable to both countries as a forum for development, security, and regional co-operation. ASEAN is a useful mechanism for promoting best practices in resolving bilateral disputes between member-states. Recent developments following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States have clearly energized Malaysia–Singapore bilateral relations in the security dimension. Both countries have co-operated very closely to meet the threat of international terrorism linked to al-Qaeda operatives in the region. Whatever might be the evidence,

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both governments have taken the view that the threat of religious terrorism is real, and the need to pool resources to counter that threat is ever more urgent. Malaysia's Anti-Terror Pact with the United States (14 May 2002) appears to be a follow-up of the Tripartite Anti-Terrorism Pact signed by three ASEAN members — Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines — on 7 May 2002 in Putra Jaya, Malaysia's new Federal Administrative Centre.[36] Singapore's own security links with the United States, and Manila's co-operation with U.S. Special Forces in anti-terrorism operations in the southern Philippines all attest to a higher American security presence and co-operation with ASEAN in the post-September 11 era. At a broader regional level, both Singapore and Malaysia have been instrumental in the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as a mechanism for security dialogue and co-operation involving extra-regional powers. For Malaysia, as for Singapore and other ARF members in Southeast Asia, the ARF is a confidence-building institution even if the process of establishing a regional multilateral security structure is problematic at this stage.

The operative factors that shape domestic and international policy on both sides of the equation significantly affect the types of mechanisms available and the compromises that can be reached. For Singapore, the determining factors include its geography, demographic size and character, resource scarcity, perceptions of vulnerability especially *vis-à-vis* immediate neighbours, preservation of territorial sovereignty, and economic survival through interdependence and globalization of trade, finance, and services. On the basis of similar criteria, the determinants of Malaysia's domestic and foreign policy can be stated as follows:

1. national sovereignty with particular emphasis on political integrity and the territorial unity of the Malaysian Federation,
2. economic development and social justice in the context of a multiracial society,
3. preservation of constitutional monarchy, Islam, and the special rights of the Malays,
4. a firm commitment to ASEAN and the promotion of other forms of economic regionalism that advance national interests,
5. promotion of regional stability and security via ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality), and
6. commitment to promote South-South co-operation aimed at enhancing the economic welfare of the less developed world, and support for human rights and social justice at the global level.

Formulations or conceptions of the national interest in such terms invariably activate the need for adroit diplomacy to bridge the gap between national aspirations and international realities, or to put it in

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other words, the gap between *desirability* and *possibility*. Moreover, both countries have ensured that their occasional bilateral spats are kept out of discussion at ASEAN fora. Thus, although it is plausible to subscribe to the notion of security indivisibility with respect to Malaysia and Singapore, thus giving rise to the idea of a "security complex" in combination with other ASEAN states, the evidence also indicates that owing to the persistence of bilateral as well as intra-regional disputes and differences, "the Association itself is still some way from constituting a security community".[37] Nevertheless, Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar has noted that current hiccups in the Malaysia–Singapore relationship could be resolved "if we have an open mind, good intentions, bilateral spirit and ASEAN goodwill".[38]

The ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) project is viewed by both countries as essential preparation to meet the larger challenges of economic globalization, although Singapore's developmental pace has obliged the city-state to move ahead with global economic trends by entering into several Regional Trading Arrangements (RTAs) and bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). To date, Singapore has signed FTAs with New Zealand and Japan, and is in the process of negotiating FTAs with the United States, EFTA (the European Free Trade Area), Australia, Canada, and Mexico. The urgency of speeding up AFTA liberalization was marked by the decision of ASEAN economic ministers to endorse a plan that enables any two of the ten members to free up trade in a particular business area without waiting for the other eight to do so. Both Malaysia and Singapore, together with Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, are committed to creating a free trade zone by 2010 in the wake of increasing competition especially from China.[39] AFTA is clearly seen as a vehicle for boosting intra-ASEAN economic activity especially for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Malaysia's rapid industrialization is yet another source of growing competition for Singapore — in such areas as port facilities, airports, and infrastructure projects — all of which could reduce the cutting edge which has been enjoyed by Singapore for a long time. Of late, Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) has been considering a package of incentives to fifty airlines in an attempt to lure them away from Singapore's Changi Airport — options such as a waiver of landing and parking fees, tax breaks, and passenger pick-up and drop-off rights (known as "fifth freedom rights").[40] The rising stature of Malaysia's ports has emboldened Deputy Transport Minister Ramli Ngah Talib to suggest that "Malaysian ports have grown to match Singapore's efficiency and productivity, and would be very soon the top 10 in world container traffic".[41] Yet, the changing global economic and political environment also creates opportunities for the two causeway neighbours to enjoy mutual gains by complementing their

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efforts, thereby strengthening ASEAN regionalism. Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, with reference to the bilateral spats, underscored the need to put aside differences, and work to strengthen regional co-operation by expediting mechanisms available in ASEAN.[42] Finally, competition and complementarity would continue to govern the Malaysia–Singapore relationship in the new millennium in the context of a changing international political economy. As leadership transitions take place on both sides of the causeway, the dictates of political realism could well ensure that rationalism, pragmatism, compromise, interdependence, and mutual benefit prevail in moderating bilateral relations.

NOTES

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    Malaysian ports handled 7.3 million containers in 2001, and are forecast to move 10 million containers in 2002. Singapore handled 15.5 million boxes in 2001. Malaysia's port infrastructure would be raised to handle 380 million tonnes of cargo a year, from 220 million tonnes in 2000. Johor's port of Pelabuhan Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) has pulled the Danish shipping line Maersk from Singapore. Ibid. Taiwan's biggest shipping line, Evergreen Marine, has also signed with PTP. It will move over 85 per cent of its Singapore transhipment volumes to the Malaysian port from August 2002. See *Business Times* (Singapore), 5 July 2002, p. 1–2.
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Book Reviews

Politics in Southeast Asia: Democracy or Less. **By William Case.** Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 2002. 318pp.

In its aspirations and accomplishments, *Politics in Southeast Asia* is a much "bigger" book than its length suggests. It transcends significant organizational and editorial flaws to advance a superbly researched, admirably coherent, consideration of political development across five Southeast Asian states. It successfully lifts the region from a scholarly "eddy" (p. 264) in comparative politics into the mainstream of that discipline. Even the strongest critics of William Case's assumptions and conclusions will profit from studying his book and sharpening their own analyses in response. A major work of social science can serve few more important ends than that one.

Case aims to remove two impediments to the development of systematic, theoretical understandings of Southeast Asian politics. First, the influence and durability of distinct, country-specific interpretive paradigms — neo-patrimonialism for Indonesia, ethnic politics for Malaysia, the bureaucratic polity for Thailand, patron–client ties for the Philippines, and ruling-party dominance for Singapore — have stood in the way of broad intraregional comparison and theory-building. Secondly, and in part as a result, attempts at such comparison have tended either to the unidimensional or to what Case calls the "descriptive stock take" (p. viii). In pushing aside these analytical blockages, Case seeks to advance a rigorous comparative theory of regime outcomes with a sophistication similar to those resulting from the study of Latin America, Iberia, Africa, and Northeast Asia. It should of course be

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noted that, at least as concerns the sub-field that we now call "international political economy", Case's critique of previous approaches is not entirely convincing. This exception is one that readers would do well to bear in mind when they come to the book's concluding chapter.

The scholarship in "political economy" with which Case concerns himself strikes him — at least as it relates to the questions of democratization and democratic consolidation which concern him most — as structuralist. He argues that their denial of agency makes structuralist, modernizationist, and culturalist approaches to regime change and regime type incapable of explaining both divergent outcomes among states marked by strong similarities and similar outcomes among states marked by apparent differences. This denial of agency works, *inter alia*, to perpetuate the journalistic association of economic growth with democratization that still disfigures much scholarship on the region. Taking regime type in what he calls "Southeast Asia's five most developed countries" (p. viii) as his dependent variable, Case makes inter-élite and élite-mass relations the focus of his book. From the start, however, it is clear that for Case political agency in contemporary Southeast Asia rests with the élites rather than the "masses".

The five chapters that form the core of *Politics in Southeast Asia* examine what Case terms the pseudo-democracy of New Order Indonesia, the semi-democracies of Malaysia and Singapore, and the restored democracies of Thailand and the Philippines. (While introductory allusions to Vietnam and Burma make evident Case's lively interest in élite politics in those states, his focus on democracy, its stability, and its quality explain their exclusion from detailed consideration.) Each of these chapters explains the place of the state in question in Case's typology of Southeast Asian regimes, examines its élites and their management of non-élite forces, and offers a sustained illustrative example from recent political history.

While this last feature of the book carries the risk that *Politics in Southeast Asia* will very soon come to seem dated, Case has clearly gambled on the durability of the theoretical generalizations that he draws from the episodes and developments that he treats. His formidable research into these sustained examples reduces that risk considerably. His extended treatment of the long collapse of the Soeharto regime, intended to demonstrate the erosion of pseudo-democracy through mounting élite disunity, is a near-masterpiece. With one significant difference, it calls to mind nothing so much as the numerous classic accounts of the last years of the Shah of Iran.

That difference lies, of course, in the role assigned to social forces. Case's Southeast Asia is, as he repeatedly makes clear, a zone of "social

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quiescence" (for example, see pp. 49, 122, 166), of "masses" managed except at rare moments by élites in democracies, semi-democracies, and pseudo-democracies alike. In writing on Indonesia, then, Case traces processes of urbanization, industrialization, and the resultant social and cultural change that affected tens of millions of Indonesians during the New Order. However, in the end, inter-élite relations determine the course of events, and not just in Case's Indonesia. In his democratic Southeast Asia, political agency remains an élite phenomenon.

If the chapter on Malaysia assigns explanatory primacy to the ability of national élites to remain cohesive despite periodic "strain points" (pp. 114 ff.), it is the treatment of the Philippines and Thailand that allow Case to address directly democratic stability, democratic quality, and their determinants. Again, these determinants lie in the nature of relations among élites, as cohesive in the former context as they are fragmented in the latter. For all his concern with democratic consolidation, however, some of these two chapters' contentions appear rather weak.

Case's pessimism about the stability of Thai democracy is likely to prove unwarranted, and readers may well find his harsh judgement of the quality of Philippine democracy *ad hoc* if commonsensical. Furthermore, the sharp distinctions that Case would draw between "metropolitan" and "provincial" business élites (pp. 156 ff. and 174 ff.) in his discussion of inter-élite competition in Thailand since the 1980s are simplistic at best and meaningless at worst. To be sure, Case is by no means alone in his reading of the Thai private sector and its political roles; it puts him in some very fine company. However, as with his analyses of business élites in other states, that reading may well be too fragile a basis for the claims made in the book's conclusion.

The chapter on Singapore is short but effective in advancing Case's argument for élite agency and the importance of voluntarism in the region's politics.

For a work of such scope and ambition, *Politics in Southeast Asia* suffers from few apparent errors of detail. The chapter on Thailand would benefit from more systematic, less inconsistent transliteration of Thai names and terms. However, a brief statistical appendix on the five countries studied will come in handy to many readers, and impressive, informative end-notes complement each chapter's discussion and analysis. At the same time, the very richness of those notes makes Curzon Press's decision to release a volume of this sort without a bibliography difficult to understand or to countenance.

In other ways, too, Curzon and its editors have served Case poorly. There is good reason to leave to graduate students in political science

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such usages as "more than trivial" (p. 27) and "soft-lining élites" (p. 250). Moreover, at roughly fifty dense pages each, the chapters on Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines are just too long. While the book's broad coverage, its theoretical rigour, its engagement with debates on "third-wave" democratization, its well-narrated episodes of recent political history, and even its appearance in paper-back underline its strong potential for classroom use, the length of the four major substantive chapters is likely to put off many lecturers and students. In some part, that length results from Case's allowing himself frequent repetition both of fact and of analysis. All too often, he resorts to "In sum" (for example, pp. 108, 126, 143,155,157, 213, 237, 264) and other, similar rhetorical devices to begin sentences that recapitulate material already covered. Again, a reviewer cannot avoid the conclusion that Case deserved more engaged, more fully collaborative editors than those with whom he worked.

The concluding chapter of *Politics in Southeast Asia* focuses, somewhat surprisingly, on the centrality of relations between state and business élites as determinants of regime-type outcomes. As throughout the book, Case offers a thoughtful typology among the five countries treated. However, the chapter's country-by-country sketches of states' management (in New Order Indonesia and Singapore) and alienation (in Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines) of business élites repeat material introduced in earlier chapters. On the other hand, those chapters did not (as I have already suggested with reference to the Thai case) treat the structure and conduct of Southeast Asian business in anything approaching depth concomitant with the importance that the book's conclusion would now assign to that component of national élites.

It is tempting to see in Case's abrupt narrowing of focus to state-business relations in this final chapter an analogous narrowing of his aspirations for *Politics in Southeast Asia*. In the end, one might suspect, he would rather contribute to the important, aforementioned "international political economy" literature on the region than to the debates on broader questions of democratic stability and quality towards which most of the book is oriented. In fact, however, Case seeks to argue that in the salience of state–business relations lies the significance to those broader debates of theoretical insights drawn from Southeast Asia. He pointedly notes the neglect of "the democratizing role of business élites ... in the literature on transitions" (p. 264) and calls for the restoration of "causal weight" to that role (p. 264). If more explicitly anticipated before this final chapter, the point would doubtless be more effective. All the same, both for its ambitiousness and for the skepticism that it is certain to arouse, Case's closing contention underlines the great value of this book in

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stimulating reconsideration of our own understandings of the political orders of democratic Southeast Asia.

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Democracy in Malaysia: Discourses and Practices. **Edited by Francis Loh Kok Wah and Khoo Boo Teik.** Richmond, Surrey, U.K: Curzon Press, 2002. 274pp.

This edited volume of essays examines democracy in Malaysia in the 1990s. It is both a timely and a welcome addition to the growing body of works that have sought to examine the political, social, and economic processes associated with democracy in Malaysia, particularly during the 1990s. The strength of this volume lies in the broad scope of issues that it brings to bear on the study of democracy in Malaysia. The innovative approaches used by the contributors in pursuing the questions posed in each chapter provide the reader with an insight into a set of issues, actors, and processes associated with the study of democracy in Malaysia seldom found in works of a similar nature. Many of the issues and topics raised in these essays are also relevant for comparative political analysis with other cases in Southeast Asia.

The introductory chapter (Chapter 1), written by the editors Khoo Boo Teik and Francis Loh Kok Wah, provides a concise literature review of democracy in Malaysia since independence. It also lays out the wider scope of this volume of essays, which is to provide "an updated examination of Malaysia's political system, civil society, public institutions and dominant discourses", as well as to offer a comparative "understanding of 'discourses and practices of democracy' in Southeast Asia".

The rest of the essays in the volume is divided into two parts. The first part, titled "Discourses of Democracy", comprises essays on developmentalism and democracy, the Asian values debate, and the role of Islam in the democratic politics of Malaysia. This part is comparatively more theoretical in its orientation, particularly in terms of linking some of the political developments in the Malaysian case to the normative and theoretical assumptions found in the literature on democracy. The second part, titled "The Practice of Democracy", is more empirical in nature, and includes examinations of the media,

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public administration, "political NGOs", and the role of women's movements in democratization.

In "Developmentalism and the Limits of Democratic Discourse" (Chapter 2), Francis Loh describes the rise of a consumerist/materialist culture among the emerging or new middle classes, which manifests itself politically in individuals seeking to achieve liberties and freedoms in the private sphere, rather than pursuing political equality and justice in the public sphere, much less the institutionalization of these freedoms in the political system. In this sense, Loh writes that the "politics of ethnicism" has largely been replaced by the "discourse of developmentalism", the suggestion here being that this is a change in political culture across racial/ethnic lines. Loh argues that the "discourse of developmentalism" explains to some extent the pragmatic approach adopted by the new middle classes in Malaysia towards political change, particularly with regard to the issue of greater democratization. By explaining the ways in which political and economic forces have shaped the pragmatic political culture among the rising middle classes, this essay has interesting implications for our understanding of the role of these political/social actors as agents of political change, not just within the Malaysian context but also for the region as a whole.

Khoo Boo Teik's "Nationalism, Capitalism and 'Asian Values'" (Chapter 3) provides an interesting interpretation of the Asian values position — one that views it through the prism of the world-view held by one of its most prominent advocates, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. The question remains whether contextualizing the Asian values position in this way has the effect of strengthening or weakening the arguments attributed to it. After all, to the extent that elements of these various representations of Mahathir's world-view continue to resonate among some political leaders, intellectuals, and even the general public in Malaysia (and in the region), the Asian values debate would remain relevant to the study of democracy here, at least as a "counter-discourse" to liberal democratic governance.

In "Muslim Politics and the Discourse on Democracy" (Chapter 4), Syed Ahmad Hussein not only situates Muslim politics in Malaysia within the wider context of the development of political Islam in other regions of the world, but also juxtaposes the discourse of Muslim politics in Malaysia with that of democracy. By interweaving these two areas of study, Syed Ahmad's essay argues that the Islamic Party of Malaysia is most effective politically when it is able to successfully incorporate democratic themes within an "Islamic paradigm", while at the same time exploiting some of the areas of weakness in the governing coalition.

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Part Two of this volume begins with two essays on the media in Malaysia, by Zaharom Nain and Mustafa K. Anuar respectively. Zaharom's essay, "The Structure of the Media Industry: Implications for Democracy" (Chapter 5), describes the ways in which the institutional constraints on the (mainstream) media combined with the political–economic background of its ownership structures severely constrains the media's capacity to play the role of an active agent in liberalizing the flow of information between the government and the governed. In "Defining Democratic Discourses" (Chapter 6), Mustafa traces the historical legacy behind the restricted role of the media, and links it to the state's successful consolidation of its control over the function of the media through the post-independence years, up to the 1990s. One of the effects of this, according to Mustafa, is the lack of credibility, in the eyes of the general population, of the mainstream media as purveyors of accurate information, particularly when such information is unfavourable to the government. This, in turn, has resulted in the emergence and rapid growth of an alternative media in Malaysia, which provides "democratic space" that is lacking in the mainstream media.

In "Public Administration: The Effects of Executive Dominance" (Chapter 7), Lim Hong Hai examines an area which has not been written on much, and that is "external controls" on public administration in Malaysia. Lim argues that accountability and democratic control of public administration in Malaysia are threatened by weak or ineffective control over the "political executive". Furthermore, the prospects of accountability structures emerging that are autonomous of executive control are diminished by the level of dominance exerted by the ruling party in the political system.

In "Political Non-Governmental Organizations: Ideals and Realities" (Chapter 8), Saliha Hassan provides a descriptive account of "politically engaged NGOs" and their relationship with the state, as well as the different "political discourses" used by both the "political NGOs" and the state. She argues that "political NGOs" desire a greater participatory role in the political process, as part of civil society in Malaysia. Yet, even as these "political NGOs" attempt to consolidate their role in the democratic process, they are constantly negotiating with the state over the parameters of their political role. Saliha raises questions about the dominant role of the state in delineating the spheres of political activity between the state and civil society, even as she paradoxically recognizes the importance of a strong state. Herein lies the challenge for the "political NGOs" — carving out a significant role for themselves in a political environment that is dominated by a strong state.

In "At the Center and the Periphery: The Contributions of Women's Movements to Democratization" (Chapter 9), Maznah Mohamad

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delineates women's movements in Malaysia into two categories: mainstream women's groups, and "marginal" groups. Interestingly, according to Maznah, it is the latter that have played a more significant role in advancing women's issues and interests in the political sphere. This is because mainstream groups are often "entrenched in formal politics" and tend to view their role as one that complements the ruling structures rather than one that challenges them.

Individually, the essays provide rich background information. They are also theoretically informed and well written. As a collection, this volume is successful in its explicit aim of demonstrating that "the Malaysian political system in the 1990s was undergoing important changes". More significantly, these essays enrich our understanding of Malaysian politics by explaining the ways in which these changes did not result in the political system as a whole becoming more liberal democratic. This volume makes a contribution to the scholarship on democracy in Malaysia by offering a sophisticated set of essays that are geared towards advanced students of Malaysian politics and of Southeast Asia in general.

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East Asia Imperilled: Transnational Challenges to Security. **By Alan Dupont**. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 335pp.

One of the by-products of the global "war on terror" following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States has been a renewed interest in transnational security threats, including terrorism, transnational crime, transboundary pollution, human smuggling, and disease. Alan Dupont has written a cogent and useful book detailing why these threats are growing in the Asia-Pacific region and, more importantly, why policy-makers should take them seriously.

Once viewed as the "stepchild" of security studies, transnational security issues are emerging as critical challenges to states in the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, these "complex, inter-connected and multi-dimensional" threats, as Dupont describes them, cannot be analysed or understood with the traditional tools of realism, which places the state as the most important actor in international affairs. Dupont asserts that

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"the focus of realists on conflict between states blinds them to the destabilizing effects of transnational phenomena on the internal stability of states".

Dupont is not an anti-realist however. As a former diplomat and intelligence officer, he clearly understands and acknowledges the relevance and intellectual utility of the realist paradigm as a deciphering tool for analysing relations between states. However, he argues that the rise of non-state actors — and various other non-state phenomena — requires an expansion of the traditional agenda of realism. He describes this as "extended security", which would encompass a wider view of security that includes the individual — together with the state — as a key referent.

In his Introduction and Chapter 1, Dupont provides some useful theoretical tools to lay the groundwork for subsequent discussions. The theme of "interconnectedness" dominates much of his discussions. For instance, regarding environmental threats, Dupont concedes that environmental problems have existed throughout history. "However, it is the scale, gravity and interconnectedness of today's environmental ills that accounts for their new-found policy salience."

Similarly, organized crime is certainly not new. Dupont argues, however, that "the unprecedented power and influence exercised by modern organized criminal groups and the internationalization of their networks are compelling a major reassessment of the links between crime and security". Consequently, transnational crime deserves to be treated as a security problem, and not merely a law enforcement challenge.

In the initial chapter, Dupont makes a very interesting and relevant observation about the linkage between transnational phenomena and weak states. It is often weak states which are most vulnerable to transnational threats, just as it is weak states which are often the source of transnational threats. Take illegal migration, for example. Dupont argues that, paradoxically, "weak states are frequently more capable of mounting an effective defence against military attack than they are of coping with the security consequences of large-scale migration from neighbouring states".

Following the Introduction and Chapter 1, the book subdivides into three major sections: environmental scarcity, unregulated population movements, and transnational crime and AIDS. Section 1 catalogues a series of demographic, environmental, and resource challenges facing the Asia-Pacific region. Although some of these issues are not necessarily transnational, Dupont seems to suggest that they can facilitate other transnational phenomena. For instance, rising

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urbanization in China is helping to generate a criminal culture that could strengthen Chinese organized crime.

Another challenge highlighted in Section 1 involves demographic change. Dupont notes that Asia hosts a number of states with burgeoning populations, such as China and Indonesia, that are geographically situated next to states with the opposite problem: declining and "greying" populations. In theory, this could lead to a convenient marriage in which labour surplus countries could "export" people to countries with labour/population shortages. However, this involves sensitive questions of immigration which most Asian states have failed to effectively come to terms with.

The remainder of the section lists a depressingly abundant catalogue of ills facing the Asia-Pacific region, including deforestation, climate change, unprecedented (and worsening) environmental pollution, energy shortages, food shortages, and water conflicts. On deforestation, Dupont offers the following fact: Cambodia's forest cover has declined from 73 per cent to 58 per cent, and the trend continues. Indonesia's forests are also declining at the rate of 1.5 million hectares per year. Regarding the environment, Dupont reports that the Asian Development Bank labels Asia "the world's most polluted and environmentally degraded region".

Section 2 addresses illegal migration and what is described as "unregulated population movements" (UPMs). One of Dupont's best descriptions of the sensitive problem of UPMs is actually provided in the introductory section. He argues that it is not the poorest countries that generate refugees or migrants, but rather the middle range countries because "their upwardly mobile citizens...are motivated to seek out greener pastures".

Dupont notes that one reason migration has attained security status is that many states fear its ability to alter the ethnic or racial balance of their particular societies. Perhaps this explains why some countries use migration as a political weapon to pressure neighbouring states. He reports that Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad "argued at the height of the Asian economic crisis that developing nations should swamp Europe and the United States with illegal migrants" if they insisted on "recolonizing the South using globalization".

Rising migration pressures in the Asia-Pacific region are generating another illicit by-product: a vibrant human smuggling trade. Syndicates from China earn tens of thousands of dollars bringing Chinese to prosperous Western countries and Japan. Another type of human smuggling involves child and sex trafficking. Dupont reports one shocking statistic that up to 60,000 young women, mainly from Myanmar, were smuggled into Thailand between 1991 and 1997 to

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work in the sex trade. The author points out that another source of migration in the future will likely be environmental refugees, which once again highlights the "interconnectedness" of migration and transnational environmental degradation.

The third section of the book addresses transnational crime and the AIDS epidemic. First, Dupont provides a post-Cold War overview of the rise of transnational crime around the globe. He asserts that transnational criminal activities have become so serious as to threaten the state itself. Once considered a law enforcement matter, transnational crime has "graduated" in international security relevance. Dupont suggests that one crime in particular, narcotics trafficking, is undermining Asia's social fabric. The author highlights Asia's transition from a major producer of heroin, to a major consumer region. "Until the late 1980s, virtually all of the heroin from the Golden Triangle went to the United States or other non-Asian markets, but today much of it is destined for East Asia."

Dupont argues that the "spread and internationalization of transnational crime" threatens to undermine the development of vibrant civil societies in East Asia. Such crime also threatens the "performance legitimacy" of many of the region's authoritarian regimes. Moreover, it does not help that ASEAN and its member-states adhere to a strict non-interference policy with regard to international relations. The author provocatively argues that it is the Asian countries' excessive clinging to sovereignty that has allowed transnational crime groups to flourish and prosper. The "non-interference" norm has given criminal organizations a major boost and has undermined efforts at co-operation.

The second major subject covered in this section is the AIDS epidemic. The Asia-Pacific region is considered the next epicentre for the disease. The following statistics are offered to support that contention: "Around 4 million East Asians were HIV-positive at the end of 2000 and as many as 20 million may be infected by 2010." The author argues that the link between HIV and sex has caused squeamish Asian leaders to ignore, deny, or avoid discussing sexual matters openly and this, in turn, has helped to facilitate the spread of the disease.

Despite the book's exhaustive list of transnational phenomena, the author barely touches upon one topic of current concern: terrorism. Perhaps this reflects the fact that the book was most likely completed prior to 11 September 2001. However, the growing linkage between criminal groups and terrorist groups in the Asia-Pacific region would suggest that the topic be addressed at least in the crime section. In many respects this omission may simply reflect the general view of the region prior to 11 September, which held that the Asia-Pacific region

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was somehow "exempt" from the global terrorism scourge, a notion that recent evidence has disproved.

Overall, this book is a masterful and comprehensive treatment of a subject that has emerged as a critical security challenge for Asia-Pacific countries. It is a must-read for any serious scholar on the subject. The clear and lucid writing reflects the author's background in journalism, and the extensive documentation provides a treasure trove for anyone with an inclination for additional research into this emerging and exciting area of security studies. This book would be valuable for both practitioners and scholars alike.

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***India's Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent and Ready Arsenal.* By Ashley J. Tellis.** Santa Monica, Calif., USA: Rand, 2001. 885pp.

This book describes in a very comprehensive and substantial way India's emerging nuclear posture in the context of a broader assessment of its strategic interests, institutional structures, and security goals. The Pakistani and Chinese nuclear programmes and capabilities are also addressed, but more with the purpose of illuminating India's strategic choices and future directions. The book consists of an introduction (Chapter One), four chapters and a conclusion (Chapter Six). Chapter Two surveys the strategic factors conditioning India's choices with respect to its future nuclear posture. Chapter Three analyses both the extent of the shift in India's nuclear posture after the May 1998 tests and the implications of what the search for a "minimum credible deterrent" could entail in the years to come. Chapter Four explicates India's evolving nuclear doctrine and the force posture that is likely to be created. Chapter Five assesses the adequacy of the evolving Indian deterrent in terms of the criteria offered by various nuclear deterrence theories. Finally, the conclusion surveys briefly India's security competition with Pakistan and China, the nuclear proliferation regime, and the ongoing dialogue in India–U.S. relations.

The author examines the evolution of India's official attitude towards nuclear weapons and explains the lack of movement in the

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direction of overt nuclearization by New Delhi's perception that the security environment India confronted for most of the post-independence period had in general been benign. Therefore, Indian strategic policy focused on attaining two sets of objectives: espousing the global abolition of nuclear weaponry and sustaining India's capability to produce fissile materials and delivery technologies that a full-fledged deterrent would require. While Pakistan's exploitation of its nuclear capability and growth in size of its arsenal would be two critical factors affecting India's traditional nuclear posture, strategic developments in China — India's larger and more significant nuclear rival — will have even more consequential effects. It is China's land-based ballistic missile force that remains India's principal concern in the near future. This concern is enhanced by the recognition in New Delhi that, with every passing day, the relative balance of power between China and India appears to change dramatically in favour of the former, largely because of China's high levels of sustained economic growth. Domestically, the enthusiasm for nuclear weapons could subside if it started to affect the prospects of economic growth. However, the pressures on India to create a large and diversified deterrent may well prove overwhelming if both Pakistan and China become more militant, if Sino–U.S. relations are perceived as developing at India's expense and if Sino-Indian interests begin to manifestly clash in the Asian region at large.

The book identifies five distinct nuclear postures from a continuum of possibilities, each with varying degrees of acceptability to India. They are: renunciation of the nuclear option, a regional nuclear-free zone, maintaining a nuclear option, a recessed deterrent, and a ready arsenal. It is most likely that New Delhi, following its ingrained habit of seeking the middle path, will find itself between a recessed deterrent and a ready arsenal. The most significant and distinguishing facet of India's nuclear doctrine is its consistent claim that nuclear weapons are above all else political instruments rather than military tools because they are emphatically not usable weapons in any military sense. The belief that nuclear weapons are most useful as antidotes to blackmail is deeply embedded in the Indian psyche. This, as Tellis notes, places the Indian nuclear doctrine squarely at the deterrence end of the deterrence–defence continuum. A scrupulous and competent examination of India's capabilities leads to the conclusion that India's claims to being a nuclear weapon state are somewhat overstated, since India continues to lack many of the components associated with a nuclear deterrent. New Delhi appears to have a small quantity of fissile materials, primarily weapons-grade plutonium, that continues to be accumulated at a relatively slow but increasing pace; a small number of nuclear weapons, which by most accounts are maintained in unassembled form; a small

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number of delivery systems consisting primarily of short-range tactical strike aircraft; and an embryonic supporting infrastructure. Given these generally limited capabilities, the assertion that India is now a nuclear weapon state must be interpreted more as a symbolic challenge to the existing global nuclear regime than as an accurate description of the country's present strategic capabilities.

Among the major concerns historically associated with the presence of nuclear weapons has been the fear that their enormous power might be unleashed by agents not authorized by the state. Tellis dismisses this possibility in India's case. He believes that it is extremely unlikely, given the organizational structure of India's strategic enclaves. It is almost certain that India will use a combination of secrecy, enhanced security arrangements, and physical safety devices to prevent any entities — including the uniformed military — from acquiring material custody of completed weapons.

When the question of deterrence sufficiency is considered, India's ability to deter a nuclear-armed Pakistan is not an issue simply because Pakistan's geophysical limitations make it highly vulnerable even to relatively low levels of retaliation that New Delhi might unleash. At the same time, China will continue to be a superior nuclear power whose lead both in numbers of weapons and in relative warhead yields is unlikely to be reduced by India's technical achievements during the next two decades. However, Indian strategists calculate that as long as India's nuclear capabilities present more than just token opposition, and so long as Beijing cannot be certain that it can interdict India's nuclear reserves successfully, and that a weaker India will always surrender rather than retaliate, China will in all likelihood be deterrable. They also count on the positive impact of robust American hegemony, which should guarantee that India's regional competitor, China, will not become a preponderant power capable of coercing its neighbours without fear of countervailing responses mounted by the United States in Asia or beyond. To the degree that Indo-American relations also improve over time, it bequeaths to New Delhi all the deterrence advantages accruing from closer Indian collaboration with the most important power in the international system.

Given India's growing interest and strategic dependence on the United States, Washington is urged by Tellis to undertake three policy initiatives. First, to play the role of helpful critic challenging India to think through the kinds of capabilities it needs. Secondly, to share its own assessments about the character of the strategic environment facing India. This contribution may not entail intelligence sharing but does require a willingness to share certain judgments based on the intelligence information that the United States possesses. Thirdly, the United States

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can transform its stated preference for Indo-Pakistani reconciliation over Kashmir into a clear and articulated tenet of its regional policy. All this requires a strategic vision from the United States, which seems to be lacking.

This book was completed before the events of 11 September 2001 and therefore could not have assessed the new security challenges and geopolitical realignments in South Asia and their likely impact on India's nuclear policy. At the same time, it is unfortunate that another major strategic development, that is, the United States' growing unilateralism in arms control matters manifested in plans for National Missile Defence and the withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, and its consequences for India's nuclear stance did not receive attention in the book. While New Delhi could certainly gain from Washington's information-sharing on regional security, what it perhaps needs more is clarity regarding Washington's own nuclear posture. The suggestions that Washington's new arms control paradigm is primarily targeting China, if confirmed in practice, could be significant for India's future diplomacy and military planning. Symptomatically, the book offers no recommendations on how the United States could contribute to confidence-building between India and China even though throughout the study Tellis emphasizes the prevalence of the China factor over the Pakistan threat in India's national security calculations. Instead, he urges the United States to become more proactive on the Kashmir issue. It is doubtful if Washington's greater involvement in this perennial conflict would contribute to the peace process, or even serve India's security interests.

Tellis has done a great job by producing an excellent, timely, very detailed and objective study of India's nuclear logic, strategic requirements, and possible choices concerning the nuclear programme — choices that could have a major regional as well as global impact.

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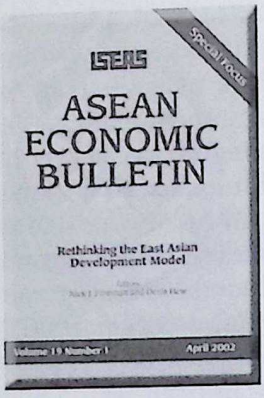

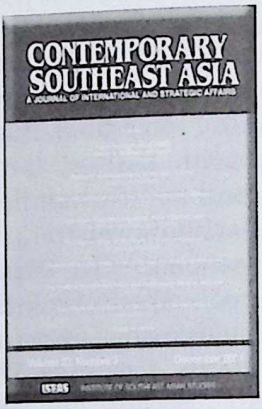

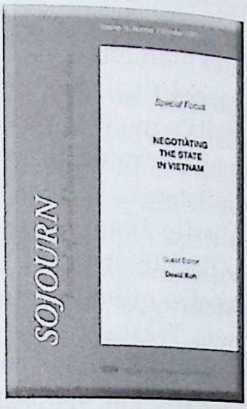

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Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian Network

ZACHARY ABUZA

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 on the United States shocked the world and resulted in a global campaign against terrorist groups. Southeast Asian states, long considered the "Islamic periphery", owing to their moderate Islamic stance, pluralism and secularism, were suddenly forced to confront a small but potent terrorist threat in their midst, culminating in the 12 October 2002 attack on a Balinese resort. Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda had entered the region beginning in the early to mid-1990s, establishing independent cells and assisting and liaising with indigenous Islamic insurgencies that hitherto were believed to have solely domestic agendas. This article analyses the origins, linkages, and network that Al Qaeda established in Southeast Asia. Though the extent of Islamic radicalism and terrorist activity is small by comparison to the Middle East or South Asia, it is still of great concern to the governments in Southeast Asia.

Introduction

The horrors of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and the ensuing war on terrorism galvanized the global community to come to terms with the reality of international terrorism. While the focus of the war on terrorism has been on Afghanistan and Pakistan, one of the key arenas is now Southeast Asia. This has caught both states and individuals in that region by surprise. Though most states in Southeast Asia have a Muslim population, ranging from 5 per

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cent in the Philippines to 85 per cent in Indonesia, the fact is that the region has always been considered the Islamic periphery. Muslims in Southeast Asia have long been characterized as secular, tolerant, modernist, and development-oriented. Moreover, many people within and outside Southeast Asia had believed that the violence and terrorism, which is a daily reality in the Middle East, was anathema to Southeast Asia.

The disclosure of the extent to which Al Qaeda cells were established, and linkages between militant Muslim organizations in Southeast Asia to Al Qaeda were made, has shocked Southeast Asian governments. Al Qaeda had slowly penetrated the region for more than a decade beginning in 1991, co-opting individuals and groups, establishing independent cells, and finding common cause with local militants for four main reasons.

First, whereas there have long been militant Muslim groups who have been fighting for their own homeland in the southern Philippines, Aceh, and to a degree in southern Thailand and Myanmar, these groups were seen to have completely domestic agendas and little interest in linking-up with international Muslim organizations. Al Qaeda emerged in Southeast Asia at a time when state-sponsorship of terrorism, notably by Libya, was waning. Moreover, Al Qaeda was able to build on its personal relationships with veterans of the Mujaheddin in Afghanistan. The leadership of almost every militant Islamic group in Southeast Asia, from the Kumpulan Mujaheddin Malaysia, Jemaah Islamiah (JI), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and Laskar Jihad, had fought with the Mujaheddin. By linking their domestic struggles with an international network, the leaders of these groups were able to pool and share resources, conduct joint training, assist each other in weapons and explosives procurement, and engage in money-laundering and financial transfers. By working internationally, domestic-oriented groups were better able to achieve their goals.

Secondly, although the majority of the populations in Southeast Asian societies are secular and tolerant, radical Islam is growing for a variety of reasons. These include economic dispossession, the lack of political freedom, the spread of Wahhabism and Salafi Islam, the failure of secular education, and an increased number of religious students studying in Middle Eastern and South Asian *madrasah* (Islamic schools). Although radical Islamicists are a distinct minority in Southeast Asia, in many cases they have shaped the agenda, and secular nationalists have not always stood up to them.

Thirdly, Southeast Asian states have been what might be termed "countries of convenience" for terrorists, with tourist-friendly policies and minimal visa requirements, generally lax financial oversights, well-

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established informal remittance systems for overseas workers, porous borders, often weak central government control, endemic government corruption, and a vast supply of illicit arms.

Finally, Southeast Asia's multi-ethnic, tolerant, and secular societies have actually attracted Al Qaeda to the region. As states focused on other threats, they had dropped their guard in relation to the potential terrorist risk. Although the Philippines raised the spectre of international terrorists operating in the region in the mid-1990s, its cries fell on deaf ears. States saw terrorism as a problem, but not a problem they considered as a direct threat to themselves.

This article has three main goals. First, it seeks to provide a brief introduction to Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda organization and explain how it differs from other hierarchical terrorist organizations. Secondly, the article seeks to briefly analyse why Al Qaeda turned to Southeast Asia. The major part of the article analyses the Al Qaeda network as it has developed from the early 1990s when the Philippines was simply used as a base of operations for Al Qaeda attacks on the United States, to the present, when a complex, multi-layered regional network has been established. The author warns the reader that it is a complex network, and that there is considerable overlap between individuals and organizations; many individuals wear multiple "hats". The article does not address all the responses of the individual states. Nor does it explain in detail the changed political and social context in Southeast Asia that has allowed groups such as Al Qaeda to take root.

The Al Qaeda Organization

The roots of Al Qaeda are found in the Maktab al Khidmat lil-Mujaheddin al-Arab (MaK), the Afghan Bureau, established between 1982 and 1984. The MaK was responsible for co-ordinating the recruitment of "Arab volunteers" to the Mujaheddin; bin Laden became the organization's principle fund-raiser. Bin Laden established Al Qaeda, literally the "Base" in 1988, with help from the head of Saudi Arabian intelligence in order to organize Arab recruitment for the Mujaheddin. In this context, he has always been involved in "international" networking.

The central leadership of Al Qaeda is small, comprising only some thirty individuals; its strength is derived from its international network of about twenty-four constituent groups, with cells that spread across some sixty countries. Al Qaeda is thought to have between 5,000 and 12,000 members.[1] As John Arquilla has noted, Al Qaeda was developed along "diverse, dispersed nodes who share a set of ideas and interests and who are arrayed to act in a fully internetted 'all-channel' manner".[2] He observes further:

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> Ideally, there is no central leadership, command, or headquarters — no precise heart or head that can be targetted. The network as a whole (but not necessarily each node) has little to no hierarchy, and there may be multiple leaders. Decision-making and operations are decentralized, allowing for local initiative and autonomy. Thus, the design may appear acephalous (headless), and at other times polycephalous (hydra-headed).[3]

Bin Laden has several lieutenants, beneath which is the Shura Majlis, or the consultative council. Four specialized committees — military, religious-legal, finance, and media — report to bin Laden and the Shura Majlis. "Vertically, Al-Qaeda is organized with Bin Laden, the emir-general, at the top, followed by other Al-Qaeda leaders and leaders of the constituent groups. Horizontally, it is integrated with 24 constituent groups. The vertical integration is formal, the horizontal integration, informal."[4] Al Qaeda is highly compartmentalized, where "groups share the principles of the networked organization — relatively flat hierarchies, decentralization and delegation of decision-making authority and loose lateral ties among dispersed groups and individuals".[5]

Al Qaeda is thought to control some eighty front companies operating in about fifty countries. For the most part, these front companies have been commercial failures. However, Al Qaeda is known to provide only start-up costs for cells and operations, and expects cells to become financially self-sustaining. Al Qaeda also relies on charities.[6]

Bin Laden established some forty training camps in Afghanistan, and estimates of the number who trained at these camps range widely from 15,000 to a high of 70,000. Approximately 6,000 became foot-soldiers in the "international brigade" that fought alongside the Taliban against the U.S. and Northern Alliance forces in late 2001. Promising trainees were selected for advanced training in establishing cells and combat, and were brought directly into the Al Qaeda organizational structure to become operational agents, while others were sent home as sleeper agents who were responsible for establishing independent cells. Most trainees simply returned to their homes to continue their own operations.

The trainees looked to bin Laden and other senior Al Qaeda leaders for guidance, "blessing", funding, and help in establishing contacts with other cells. Though most cells maintain operational autonomy, they are part of the overarching network. As Richard Schultz has noted: "They [Al Qaeda cells] are not micro-managed, but that does not mean they are not connected."[7] The links are personal, rarely structured and amorphous. And as Bruce Hoffman of the Rand Corporation has

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observed: "Al Qaeda works on multiple levels, which is what makes it such a formidable opponent. Sometimes it operates top-down, with orders coming from the CEO, and sometimes it is a venture-capitalist operation, from the bottom up, when the terrorists come to ask for finance from bin Laden."[8]

In addition to establishing independent cells, Al Qaeda was brilliant in its co-optation of other groups, those with a narrow domestic agenda, and in bringing them into Al Qaeda's structure. In short, bin Laden tried to "align with local militant groups with country-specific grievances to increase his reach and influence".[9] The groups are an amalgam of organizations: "They have not been subsumed into Al Qaeda", but "[t]hey work with Al Qaeda", giving the organization "a degree of rootedness in their countries".[10] Associates, who pledge *bayat*, a form of allegiance to bin Laden, share intelligence, money, equipment, and recruitment.[11] Although, independently, the cells are too small to make an impact, their strength lies in the network itself. Al Qaeda is able to graft itself onto radical groups in a region like Southeast Asia or establish new cells from scratch; and increasingly, these cells are using the overall network to co-ordinate their activities.

Al Qaeda Turns to Southeast Asia

Southeast Asian states are havens for a small number of terrorists, and have been penetrated by Al Qaeda operatives for three primary reasons: the Afghan connection to Middle Eastern extremists; the increasing grievances of Muslims within Southeast Asian states based on socio-economic and political reasons; and, finally, Southeast Asian states have been considered "countries of convenience" by international terrorists.

Up to a thousand Southeast Asian Muslims fought with the Mujaheddin in the 1980s, and there has been an Afghan connection to most of the radical Islamic groups in the region. Beginning in 1982, the Pakistani intelligence service, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), began to "recruit radical Muslims from around the world to come to Pakistan and fight with the Afghan Mujaheddin" against Soviet forces.[12] Between 1982 and 1992, some 35,000 Muslim radicals from thirty-five countries joined the Mujaheddin, with 17,000 from Saudi Arabia alone. The recruitment did not stop with the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Undeniably, combat in Afghanistan was the formative experience for Southeast Asian *jihadis*. In Indonesia, there was the "Group of 272" of returned veterans, and the key leaders of radical groups in the region are all veterans of the Mujaheddin: Jaffar Umar Thalib, Hambali,

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Mohammed Iqbal Rahman, Nik Aziz Nik Adli, Abdurajak Janjalani, and others. One cannot overstate how important the Afghan connection has been: it was the basis for Al Qaeda's network around the world.

More extensive and influential were, in fact, the networks of Islamic schools, or *madrasah*, that were established in the 1980s to train refugees and young Pakistanis, whose secular school system began to crumble. The *madrasah* were the ideological frontline against the Soviets, the primary socialization vehicle and recruitment organ for *jihad*, and later for the Taliban. The products of *madrasah* have been radical Muslims who believe that their life's mission is *jihad*: "They leave the schools with only a rudimentary knowledge of the world, but a fanatical belief in the supremacy of Islam and their responsibility to fight and ensure its spread."[13] By 2000, there were some 6,000 *madrasah* in Pakistan, home to more than 600,000 students.[14] During the 1980s, up to 100,000 foreigners attended *madrasah* in Pakistan where they came into contact with the *jihad* and established transnational networks.

Most Southeast Asians returned from Pakistan *madrasah* to set about committing themselves to running *jihad* at home, recruiting followers, in an attempt to create Islamic states governed by *Shariah* (Islamic) law. The Mujaheddin who returned to Southeast Asia established a network of *madrasah* as their recruitment vehicle. Since the Mujaheddin, tens of thousands of Southeast Asian Muslims have travelled to the Middle East to study in Islamic universities, including those in Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Pakistan. Thousands of Southeast Asians have also studied in the Pakistani *madrasah* that gave rise to the radical Taliban regime.[15] These *madrasah* tend to teach the very strict and orthodox Wahhabi brand of Islam, which is a very literal interpretation of the Koran. For no other reason, the financial power of Saudi Arabia has ensured that its predominant Islamic sect has been able to propagate itself around the world, including countries in Southeast Asia, which have always had a very tolerant and un-doctrinaire interpretation of Islam. Much of the international funding for Islamic schools (*madrasah* and *pesentren*) and new mosque construction have come from Saudi charities which advocate Wahhabism. The Pakistani *madrasah* have also blended rigid Wahhabism with Deobandism, an authoritarian and pan-Islamic sect that emerged in the sub-continent in the nineteenth century.

Madrasah have not been just a Middle Eastern phenomenon. In their pursuit of the creation of Islamic states, many Southeast Asian *jihadis* established Islamic schools to indoctrinate, propagate, and recruit. Many of the *madrasah* and *pesentren* in Southeast Asia, which were set up since the late 1980s, have advocated a stricter, more intolerant

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brand of Islam, and have condemned the secular nation-state. The vast majority of Southeast Asian Muslims do not attend *madrasah* and *pesentren;* instead, they are products of secular education. Yet, more children are being educated in Islamic schools because of the failure of some states to provide adequate secular schooling, and there has also been a surge in interest in Arabic studies.

The second reason that Al Qaeda looked to Southeast Asia is related to the first. The Islamic resurgence in the region has occurred because of long-standing disputes with secular governments. Many of the Islamic movements in Southeast Asia have legitimate grievances, whether they have been repressed, clamour for autonomy, or simply desire greater religious freedom. Economically speaking, Muslims are generally less well off in those Southeast Asian states with such communities.[16] Indeed, Malaysia had to implement a reverse-affirmative action programme in the early 1970s, following race riots in 1969, to give the Malay/Muslim majority a greater share of the nation's wealth.[17] There are considerable socio-economic inequalities that exist across Southeast Asia between the different religious communities, and these were exacerbated by the Asian economic crisis of 1997–98.

The growth of Islamic extremism around the world, since the Iranian revolution in 1979, has less to do with theology and more to do with the failure of the domestic political economies of respective Muslim countries. Increasing gaps between the rich and poor, inequitable distribution of wealth, poverty, a lack of economic diversity, unemployment, corruption, and the lack of a viable political alternative, have all given rise to Islamic extremism. People literally have become so desperate that they have nowhere to turn to except extremist religious politics. The Iranian revolution, which took place in the most secular state of the Middle East, was clearly a catalyst. The most secular governments in the Muslim world are Malaysia and Indonesia, which had been two of the fastest growing economies from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s. Once their economies slowed and became mired in the Asian economic crisis, which gave rise to *reformasi* (reformation) and democratic movements, Islamic extremism was able to take hold and enter the mainstream, whereas before it was on the fringes of society.

In addition to having a receptive population and being a large source of recruits, many of the countries in Southeast Asia are also "countries of convenience" that have become attractive bases of operations for terrorist cells. Each country has its own "comparative advantage" in the eyes of terrorists.

First, several police forces and governments in Southeast Asia are plagued by corruption. Thus, terrorists are able to operate and plan

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attacks with little concern for their own security. Moreover, despite large intelligence and internal security apparatuses in many of the countries, there does not seem to be much understanding of their neighbours and a dearth of technical and analytical capabilities. "We lack the infrastructure", complained one Philippine intelligence official to the author. "We have no computerized immigration or tax databases. It is easy for foreigners to marry Filipinas and change their names." Many of the security agencies are simply over-extended; they cannot keep up with international terrorists, not to mention domestic insurgent groups.

Secondly, the importance of tourism to Southeast Asian economies has resulted in lax immigration procedures and easy access visas. The borders are also very porous, making it easy for terrorists to launder their identities.

Thirdly, there are considerable financial linkages between Southeast Asia and the Middle East to facilitate the thriving trade between the two regions. Southeast Asia has a business-friendly environment, where the establishment of shell or front companies is very simple to achieve. Three countries in the region — the Philippines, Indonesia, and Myanmar — are on the OECD's (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) Financial Action Task Force's blacklist of money-laundering states.

The nexus between terrorism and transnational crime also cannot be overlooked. Because of Thailand's place in the international drug trade, there is a culture of money-laundering and corruption. According to the Thai Government, some Bt100 billion in drug money is laundered annually through financial institutions in Thailand.

Fourthly, there is a proliferation of weapons in Southeast Asia. Every state, with the exception of Laos and Brunei, produces small arms and ammunition.[18] They are also home to several leading arms brokers, who exploit legal loopholes in the sale of weapons from legal sources (government-owned or contracted firms).

Finally, especially in the case of Indonesia and the southern Philippines, there is weak, if not complete lack of, central government control. There are parts of the region that are all but lawless, or under the control of Islamic militants, giving members of Al Qaeda safe haven. The fact that Jakarta was unaware of a terrorist camp in Poso, or could not stop 3,000 Laskar Jihad militants from going to fight a *jihad* in Maluku is indicative of the tenuous control it has over the provinces. In the Philippines, the MILF controls roughly 10 per cent of Mindanao. Even in Malaysia, which has a strong state, the Jemaah Islamiah was able to operate a training camp, undetected.

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The Philippines

It may seem strange to think of Islamic-based terrorism having ties with the devoutly Catholic Philippines. Yet, according to U.S. officials, "The Philippines have become a major operational hub [of Al Qaeda], and it's a serious concern."[19] Some of the worst terrorist plots in recent memory were planned in the Philippines, including Ramzi Yousef's plot to shoot down eleven U.S. airliners in "48 hours of terror", and every major terrorist plot by Al Qaeda against the United States has had some ties with the Philippines. Links to international terrorist organizations are a fairly new phenomenon in the Philippines, but Islamic resistance to control by Manila is not.

The MILF's Afghan Connection

The MILF is currently the leading Muslim rebel movement fighting the Philippine Government. The MILF fields between 12,000 and 15,000 combatants. The Philippine Government continues to enter into negotiations with the movement. Nonetheless, whereas the MILF may have legitimate national liberation aspirations, it has forged linkages with international terrorist groups, notably Al Qaeda, for financial support, especially after funding from Libya waned substantially in the mid-1990s.

The roots of MILF contact with Al Qaeda date back to the period of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, when the MILF sent an estimated 700 Filipino Muslims to undergo military training and join the Mujaheddin.[20] According to a classified Philippine intelligence report, the MILF dispatched the trainees in three waves.[21] The first group of 600 was sent to Pakistan in January 1980. Most travelled under travel documents and visas acquired after receiving false employment with a Middle East firm. This has remained the MILF's *modus operandi* as the Philippines has an estimated 7 million of its people as Overseas Foreign Workers (OFWs). The rest travelled as either Islamic scholars or pilgrims to Mecca. The first group was met in Pakistan by Salamat Hashim before being transferred to camps in Afghanistan. Of the 600, only 360 underwent the year-long military training; 180 of these actually joined the Mujaheddin.[22] A second but smaller batch was dispatched. The third batch of trainees was sent in groups of five, using student visas or OFW contracts as cover.

The MILF saw the training in Afghanistan as very important in the development of the movement. A Philippine intelligence report notes that: "Usually those selected were on field commander status, with leadership potential, with armed followers and had money to finance the trip." This last point is important. Throughout the Soviet period,

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there was little indication that the MILF was receiving large amounts of external funding to support its volunteer and training activities in Afghanistan. The steady flow of external funding began in the early 1990s. Osama bin Laden, a scion of the largest construction magnate in Saudi Arabia, who had joined the Mujaheddin, established "the Base" — Al Qaeda — in 1988, to facilitate Muslims from around the world to join the *jihad* in Afghanistan and to forge an international network.

Jamal Mohammed Khalifa and the Origins of the Southeast Asian Al Qaeda Connection

Bin Laden already had some ties with the Philippines. In 1988, he dispatched his brother-in-law Mohammed Jammal Khalifa[23] to the Philippines to recruit fighters for the war in Afghanistan. Khalifa was already engaged in radical Muslim politics and was a very senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood in his native Lebanon.

Bin Laden clearly saw the potential of the Philippines and he was alarmed at the Moro National Liberation Front's (MNLF's) ongoing peace negotiations with the Philippine Government. In his eyes, the MNLF was selling out and abandoning the goal of establishing an Islamic state. Khalifa travelled throughout the Moro region to recruit and facilitate the *jihadis*' travels to Pakistan. He left the Philippines in either 1989 or 1990, but he returned in 1991 to establish a permanent Al Qaeda network.[24]

At the time, he was officially the regional director for the Saudi-based charity, the Islamic International Relief Organization (IIRO), responsible not just for projects in the Philippines but also in Indonesia, Thailand, and Taiwan.[25] Later, the IIRO decided to have separate directors for each of the countries, and Khalifa became the IIRO head for the Philippines. The IIRO claims to have begun charitable work in the Philippines in 1988,[26] but according to documents registered at the Philippine Securities Exchange Commission, the IIRO was legally incorporated in the Philippines on 20 September 1991 with offices in Makati and in several cities in Mindanao. Khalifa was listed as the IIRO's president and chairman of the board of trustees.[27]

Khalifa set out to establish a thorough network. According to interviews with Philippine intelligence officials, Khalifa developed his network very slowly and carefully. In their eyes, he did a meticulous and professional job. Although Philippine authorities had some concerns about Khalifa, the fact is that they had no idea of the extent of his operation.[28] He was well respected in the local community, and included members of the Philippine *élite* to sit on his board of directors. He was able to get the Saudi Arabian Embassy to assist his charities.

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The MILF-Al Qaeda Connection

Established in the Philippines, Khalifa began to provide covert assistance to the MILF in two ways — financially, and through training. In addition, he provided overt assistance by funding development projects in zones under MILF control, or to areas that constituted core constituencies of MILF supporters. Khalifa began to covertly channel money to the MILF, starting in the early 1990s. In a 1998 interview, Al Haj Murad, the MILF Vice-Chairman for Military Affairs, admitted that bin Laden and Khalifa provided "help and assistance" to MILF cadres who volunteered in the 1980s to help the Taliban struggle against the Soviet-backed Afghan regime.[29] On 7 February 1999, Salamat Hashim admitted in a BBC interview to receiving aid from bin Laden, although again stating that it was humanitarian aid for mosque construction and social welfare. This new source of assistance was imperative to the MILF, as its traditional supporter, Libya, was reducing military assistance to both the MILF and the MNLF as it was trying to broker a peace agreement with the Philippine Government. Libya, hoping to get sanctions lifted, imposed after the Lockerbie bombing (where its involvement had been proven), used its leverage to get the MNLF to sign an autonomy accord with the government. To that end, Libya had to reduce the amount of armaments entering the Philippines. However, there is ample evidence that the Libyans are still "in the game". A military intelligence officer has stated that many of the MILF weapons the military continues to seize are of Libyan origin.[30] However, Libya has had to be careful: it cannot be seen as a supporter and a key negotiator in the conflict while still arming one faction.

The MILF denies all links to Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. Although the MILF admits having a relationship with Khalifa, it argues that Khalifa was simply a philanthropist engaged in social work. An MILF spokesman has asserted that "Khalifa was cleared by the U.S. government. [It] found he had no links to bin Laden."[31] When asked to respond to the 1998 comments by Al Haj Murad, the MILF's Vice-Chairman of Military Affairs, that the MILF did indeed receive aid and funding from bin Laden's Al Qaeda network, the MILF spokesman said that the statement "was taken out of context".[32]

The second type of assistance that the MILF has received from Al Qaeda has been in the form of training, both in Mindanao and abroad. For example, Al Haj Murad admitted to receiving "substantial help and assistance from bin Laden, including the training of his fighters in bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan". In September 2001, a Philippine senator asserted that bin Laden had attempted to recruit some seventy MILF fighters, who had applied for employment in a Saudi company allegedly

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owned by bin Laden.[33] This fits in with the MILF exfiltrating its fighters out of the Philippines into Pakistani and Afghan training camps.

More common, however, has been the infiltration of Middle Eastern trainers into MILF camps. Beginning in the mid-1990s, Pakistan began to clamp down on foreign *jihadis* entering the country. To that end, a steady flow of trainers began to arrive in the Philippines to train MILF and Abu Sayyaf guerillas. Perhaps the most important Al Qaeda trainer was al Mughiri al Gaza'iri, a commander of an Al Qaeda camp in Afghanistan and a very close associate of Abu Zubaydah. Al Gaza'iri came to the Philippines in 1995 and taught in the MILF's Camp Abu Bakar. The MILF denies that there has ever been foreign trainers, and asserts that this is government propaganda to tarnish it as a legitimate freedom-fighting force, as against a terrorist organization.[34] Several military intelligence personnel have told the author that they have found individuals wearing turbans in MILF camps that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has overrun, and men with very thick beards, uncharacteristic of Filipinos. In mid-2000, the AFP found the bodies of several Middle Eastern and Pakistani "trainers" at an MILF base they captured. An Arab Mujaheddin fighter was monitored visiting the MILF's Camp Abu Bakar from May to June 2000.[35] In addition to foreign trainers, AFP personnel have recovered considerable amounts of documentation, such as visas and passports. Following the Philippine Government's capture of the main MILF base, Camp Abu Bakar, in 2001, intelligence personnel discovered a cantonment within the camp specifically for foreign trainers and trainees. More recently, the MILF established a camp near Cotabato City for foreign trainers. Philippine military intelligence believes that the MILF has played host to several hundred trainers from the Middle East.[36]

Al Qaeda has placed a large number of instructors in MILF camps since the mid-1990s, not just to assist the MILF, but also for other *jihadis* in the region, such as the Malaysian Kumpulan Mujaheddin, Jemaah Islamiah, and Laskar Jundullah. With their secure base areas, geographic proximity, and porous borders, it has been far easier and more cost-effective for Al Qaeda to bring its trainers to the region, than bringing hundreds of Southeast Asian militants to Pakistan and Afghanistan. A senior MILF cadre, Sulaiman, who himself had trained in Afghanistan, has become an important trainer in MILF camps and is a key liaison between the MILF and foreign militants, including Al Qaeda operatives in Southeast Asia who train in MILF camps. JI members not only trained at MILF camps, but were also active fund-raisers for the MILF. Of the thirty-six people detained in an anti-terrorist sweep in Singapore in 2002, four were not found to be JI members but active supporters and fund-raisers for the MILF.

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The role of foreign trainers was manifest in another way — a suicide attack on 14 October 1997. At the time, morale in the MILF was quite low. Its sister organization, the MNLF, had just signed an autonomy agreement with the Philippine Government and the MILF had suffered a series of battlefield defeats. In order to raise morale and demonstrate how committed they were to the Islamic cause, MILF soldiers together with two foreign trainers — an Egyptian, Mohammed Gharib Ibrahimi Sayed Ahmed, and a Saudi Arabian, Al Maki Ragab — carried out a suicide attack on the headquarters of the AFP's VI Infantry near Cotabato City, killing six.[37] The MILF denied it was involved in the attack. AFP officials admitted that the suicide attack did have the desired effect and that afterwards the MILF's morale went up dramatically.

On 1 August 2000, there was a bomb attack on the Jakarta residence of the Philippine Ambassador to Indonesia. This bombing cum assassination attempt was seen by many analysts as a "thank you note" to the MILF. The bombing was carried out by an Indonesian JI operative, Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, who had trained JI personnel in bomb-making at MILF camps, and who, with Muklis Yunos, the head of the MILF's special operations division, had detonated a series of bombs in Manila in December 2000. There are also growing linkages to extremist Muslim groups in Indonesia. Indonesian passports have been found at a Mindanao camp overrun by Philippine forces, and other Indonesian extremists were trained in the Philippines by the MILF. One military intelligence officer told the author that most likely the training of Indonesians by the MILF was not conducted in their main base area of Camp Abu Bakar but in one of their smaller and more remote bases on Tawi-Tawi.[38]

The links between the MILF and Al Qaeda are well established. There is ample evidence that during the 1990s the MILF received funding and training from Al Qaeda operatives. For the most part, this money came through the Al Qaeda network established by Jamal Mohammed Khalifa, in particular the IIRO. The linkages were both ideological and personal. The MILF, in bin Laden's eyes, was worthy of funding. The relationship between the MILF and Al Qaeda was significant, and Philippine intelligence intercepted regular telephone calls between Abu Zubaydah, a senior Al Qaeda operations officer, now in U.S. custody, and Salamat Hashim, Yusof Alongon (the head of the MILF Finance Committee) and Abdu Nasser Nooh (the MILF's liaison officer in Manila).[39]

The Abu Sayyaf Group and the Afghan Connection

Of greater public interest than the MILF is the small but very violent Abu Sayyaf. The origins of the Abu Sayyaf can be traced to Afghanistan.

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In the early 1980s, between 300 and 500 Moro fundamentalists arrived in Peshawar, Pakistan, to serve with the Mujaheddin. One of them, Ustadz Abdurajak Janjalani, emerged as their leader.[40] Janjalani was the son of a local *ulama*.[41] A fiery Islamic orator, he had attended Islamic universities in Libya and Saudi Arabia before joining the Mujaheddin and fighting the Soviets for several years. Philippine National Police (PNP) intelligence documents indicate that Janjalani's studies in Syria and Libya were financed by Khalifa.[42]

In Peshawar, Janjalani befriended Osama bin Laden. Janjalani and his younger brother Khaddaffy Janjalani received training in the late 1980s and into the 1990s at a training camp near Khost, Afghanistan, that was run by a scholar of Islam, Abdur Rab Rasul Sayyaf, whose belief in the strict Wahhabi interpretation of Islam found him favour with many wealthy Saudis, including Osama bin Laden.

Janjalani was committed to waging a *jihad* back in his native Philippines to create a pure Islamic state in the Moro islands based on *Salafi Wahhabism*. Following the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan, Janjalani began making frequent trips between his home in Basilan and the Peshawar-Afghan border region recruiting supporters. Ten leading MNLF officials joined Janjalani, including Ustadz Wahab Akbar and Abdul Ashmad. When Osama bin Laden wanted to expand his Al Qaeda network, he turned to Janjalani to establish a cell in Southeast Asia. According to Simon Reeve, bin Laden was looking to expand his global network and was looking for new cells to support; Janjalani was looking for money to expand his movement; and, Ramzi Yousef was looking for a new mission. "It all came together" in Peshawar in 1991.[43] PNP intelligence documents suggest that it was Ramzi Yousef who had encouraged the formation of the Abu Sayyaf group to serve as his contact and support group in the Philippines. At the time, Ramzi Yousef, the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, was teaching at the Khost camp. Yousef and Janjalani struck up a close friendship in early 1991.[44] Yousef travelled with Janjalani to the Philippines from December 1991 to May 1992 at bin Laden's request, where he trained Abu Sayyaf group (ASG) members in bomb-making in their camp on Basilan island. When Yousef was introduced to Janjalani's assistant and a leader of the Abu Sayyaf, Edwin Angeles,[45] he was introduced as an "emissary from bin Laden", and referred to as "the Chemist", owing to his proficiency in bomb-making.

In 1991, the ASG received some P12 million in grants from foreign sources, mainly from Al Qaeda, but also from Libya.[46] On 29 January 1992, the ASG received some P160,000 from Khalifa. The ASG began to receive large deliveries of weapons from Victor Blout, a Tajik arms dealer who was later linked to both the Taliban regime and Al Qaeda.[47]

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Very quickly, the ASG made its mark. It began its terrorist attacks in the Philippines in 1991 when it killed two American evangelists in a grenade blast in Zamboanga city. The ASG attacked Ipil in April 1995, and in February 1997 assassinated a Catholic bishop. Between 1991 and 1996, the ASG was responsible for sixty-seven terrorist attacks, more than half of which were indiscriminate bombings. All led to the death of 58 people, with another 398 injured.

Through his sermons and notoriety following a series of kidnappings and massacres, other gangs of Moro brigands in the Sulu islands began to accept Janjalani as their chief.[48] Abu Sayyaf grew in strength when it began receiving more Al Qaeda funding.

The Bojinka Plot

Although the Abu Sayyaf's scope primarily focused on their domestic grievances, they had linkages to the broader Al Qaeda network. As mentioned above, while in Khost, Janjalani came into contact with Ramzi Yousef, who had moved to the Philippines in mid-1994 following the December 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. Using the Philippines as his base of operations, Yousef planned a series of spectacular terrorist plots. The Bojinka plots included attempts to bomb eleven U.S. airliners and to assassinate the Pope, who visited the Philippines in early 1995. Philippine police believed that Yousef relied on Abu Sayyaf contacts and intended to recruit Abu Sayyaf operatives to help carry out his plan. Although there is no direct evidence linking Abu Sayyaf to these failed plots, the Abu Sayyaf claimed credit for the June 1995 bombing of a Tokyo-bound Philippine Airlines flight, which Philippine police believe was a dry-run for Yousef's plan to down the eleven U.S. airliners.

On the run from the law for his role in the World Trade Center bombings, Yousef fled to Pakistan, and then travelled to the Philippines via Malaysia. He spent a short period of time in the southern island of Basilan where he trained approximately twenty Abu Sayyaf militants in the art of bomb-making. At this point, the Philippine authorities had no idea that one of America's most wanted men was on their territory. They began to increase surveillance of the ASG in June 1994, after a series of bombs went off in Zamboanga, attributed to the ASG, and which killed more than seventy people. The first tip-off that there were connections to international terrorist groups was that a leading suspect was carrying a letter claiming responsibility for the bombings, signed by the Al Harakat Al Islamiah, the same group that had claimed responsibility for the 1993 attacks on the World Trade Center. The suspect detained, Abdul Asmad, was believed to be the international liaison officer of the ASG.[49] Yet, they were still unaware of Yousef's

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presence in the country. The police began to increase surveillance of foreign nationals from the Middle East and to scrutinize phone records. In September 1994 in Zamboanga, as a result of increased surveillance, six ASG members were arrested and a cache of weapons was seized. Interrogation of the suspects directed the police to Manila, where they began to increase surveillance on the IIRO.

The Ramzi Yousef Cell

The Ramzi Yousef terrorist cell in Manila centred around Khalifa, Ramzi Yousef, and two key individuals, and approximately fifteen others with limited knowledge of the operation. Everyone in the cell had very specific functions, and in many cases, once that function was completed, they left the country.[50] Perhaps the most important person in the cell was Khalid Sheik Mohammad, also known as Salem Ali, who came to the Philippines in early 1994 and posed as a Qatari plywood exporter. Mohammad was thought to be a major operational planner for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) also named him as a key planner of the 11 September 2001 attacks. Within Al Qaeda, he is known as "the Brain", owing to his operational knowledge and key role in the planning of Al Qaeda attacks.

The second most important individual was Wali Khan Amin Shah, a close associate of Osama bin Laden and Ramzi Yousef. Bin Laden spoke highly of Wali Khan, referring to him as the "Lion", but had "no comment" as to whether the latter worked for him.[51] He had previously worked for the IIRO in Peshawar, Pakistan, and was carrying IIRO identity documents when arrested.[52] Wali Khan travelled extensively to the Philippines, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Thailand. Abu Omar admits to knowing Wali Khan in the Philippines as early as 1993. Wali Khan was associated with a Khalifa-run company in Malaysia. Intelligence reports make clear that they believed he was in overall charge of financial logistics for the Yousef cell.

Bojinka Unfolds

On 10 December 1994, Philippine Airlines 747-200 Flight 434, carrying 273 passengers and 20 crew, *en route* from Cebu to Tokyo, was forced to make an emergency landing after a bomb went off in the cabin, killing a Japanese businessman. This bombing, though claimed to be the work of the ASG, was a dry-run to test Yousef's plan to bomb eleven U.S. airliners in "48 hours of terror".[53] Yousef planted the bomb during the trip's first leg from Manila to Cebu where he disembarked. This bomb was Yousef's trademark: a small nitro-glycerine bomb set off by a Casio watch. His plan was that five individuals, including himself,

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were all to depart from different Asian cities, each placing a timed bomb on a flight during its first leg of a trans-Pacific flight. They would then transfer to another flight to place a second bomb. The bombs were to detonate simultaneously over the Pacific.[54]

Yousef's Al Qaeda cell was initially broken up by accident, and then by good police work.[55] The planning and scope of the Yousef cell was staggering. Bin Laden proved that he could establish an autonomous cell impervious to detection, which could plan and execute deadly attacks.

Despite the links between the ASG and Al Qaeda, Yousef really did not trust the ASG or think it capable enough to carry out serious terrorist acts. He used his own men, all flown in from the Middle East. Yousef and Wali Khan were willing to train members of the ASG, but they did not rely on them to the degree that observers have indicated. At most, members of the ASG provided logistical support and assisted Yousef and Wali Khan in exfiltrating the country. Thus, the Bush Administration's assertions of the ASG's connection to Al Qaeda is rather tenuous.

Finally, it seems that by 1996, bin Laden had lessened his interest in the Philippines, determined instead to take his *jihad* to the Holy Land, from where he would drive out both the Americans and their secular puppet regimes. Bin Laden's operation had moved to Khartoum, Sudan, and, after 1996, to Afghanistan, where he became intent on creating an international network and a business empire to fund it. Cells continued to be developed in the Philippines and elsewhere in Southeast Asia, but the region became secondary to Al Qaeda.

Malaysia

The Ramzi Yousef case was always portrayed as a Philippine problem, but this is a naive proposition. The cell leaders made extensive use of the wider Southeast Asian region and, in particular, Malaysia. Malaysia was an alternative base of operations, a transit point, and an important place to establish front companies. Yousef and Wali Khan both fled the Philippines to Malaysia for a reason: they hoped to rely on an existing Al Qaeda network to protect them and facilitate their further travels. In January 2002, the FBI said — though later it retracted — that Malaysia was a key springboard state for Al Qaeda operations, including the 11 September attacks on the United States.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has repeatedly said that there are no Al Qaeda cells in Malaysia, although that is belied by the number of arrests by Malaysian authorities during 2002 of local affiliates of Al Qaeda. In 1998–99, top aides to two of the most senior

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Algerian terrorists, Antar Zouabri and Hassan Hattab, moved to Malaysia.[56] By virtue of being a predominantly Muslim country, it is relatively easy for Muslim radicals to fit into Malaysian society. As an Islamic banking and financial centre, not to mention having been one of the world's hottest economies during the 1980s and 1990s, Malaysia was a natural place to establish front companies from the Middle East. There are also significant movements of peoples between the Middle East and Malaysia.

Most alarming was the fact that on 5 January 2000 there was a major meeting in Malaysia of key bin Laden lieutenants (including Tawfiq bin Atash), top suspects in the bombing of the *USS Cole* in Yemen on 12 October 2000;[57] two of the 11 September hijackers, Khalid al-Mindhar and Nawaq (Salem) al-Hazmi; and Ramzi bin al-Shibh, a close associate of Mohammed Atta. The FBI described Tawfiq as: "The intermediary between bin Laden himself and the [*USS Cole*] attack planners."

For many years, Malaysian authorities publicly downplayed the threat posed by radical Islamists. Much of the reason for this is that the Malaysian Government has always portrayed Malaysia as a progressive, modern, and tolerant Muslim state. Therefore, any talk of Islamic radicalism and/or terrorism emanating from the country was seen by the government as an attempt to brand Malaysia (and all Muslims) as extremists — a way for the West to hold Malaysia back, so it was argued by the government. The fact is, since the early 1990s, Al Qaeda has found Malaysia to be a convenient base of operations. Moreover, it has been able to graft onto a small but growing community of Islamic radicals.

Establishing Roots

In 1988, when Jamal Mohammed Khalifa first came to Southeast Asia, he had arrived under the cover of being the IIRO's regional director. The organization subsequently decided to have individual country directors, and Khalifa took over as the head of operations in the Philippines. In 1994, Khalifa was forced out of the Philippines, and in 2000 the IIRO was also forced to shut down its Philippine office. This was a blow to the Al Qaeda network in Southeast Asia. Khalifa had spent years establishing a regional network. In the mid-1990s, there seemed to be a lull in Al Qaeda operations in Southeast Asia, but in the late-1990s, Al Qaeda appointed Ahmad Fauzi, also known as Abdul al Hakim, to co-ordinate Al Qaeda operations in Southeast Asia. Fauzi based his operations in Malaysia, while another Al Qaeda operative, Omar Al-Faruq, was first dispatched to the Philippines and then to Indonesia in 2000. In a familiar pattern, Fauzi set about establishing

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independent Al Qaeda cells, while at the same time grafting onto existing radical movements and fringe groups. Malaysia has been one of the banking centres utilized by Al Qaeda. Operationally and logistically, Malaysia is very important to the network.

The KMM and Terrorist Linkages

The main Malaysian opposition party, Parti Islam seMalaysia (PAS), denies that it has any links to terrorist organizations, and there is no evidence that there is an institutional or official relationship to Al Qaeda, or any other international terrorist organization. The late PAS president, Fadzil Mohd Noor, admitted that PAS had established ties with Islamic regimes in the Middle East, including Sudan, Iran, and Iraq "in the name of Islamic Brotherhood".[58] However, PAS has covert linkages through an underground and extremist faction that has been linked to the Kumpulan Mujaheddin Malaysia (KMM). The KMM advocates *jihad* and it has passed edicts that American soldiers must be killed because they had repeatedly oppressed Islamic countries.[59]

The KMM was founded on 12 October 1995 by Zainon Ismail.[60] This militant cell has clear links to Al Qaeda. By the end of 2001, twenty-three KMM members had been detained under Malaysia's Internal Security Act (ISA). Several are senior party functionaries or provincial religious leaders of PAS. In early 2002, two additional KMM members were detained, bringing the total to twenty-five.[61] The KMM's goals are not limited to just turning Malaysia into an Islamic state. The KMM has a pan-Islamic agenda for Southeast Asia, and it has talked about reviving the notion of a single Islamic state comprising Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, the southern Philippines, and southern Thailand.

Indonesia

Like the Malaysian Government, the Indonesian Government has repeatedly denied that international terrorist groups, like Al Qaeda, operate in the country. Yet, evidence keeps surfacing that Indonesia has been an important Al Qaeda base-of-operations and source for recruits. Both the United States and Indonesia's neighbours have become frustrated with Jakarta's intransigence and unwillingness to arrest suspected militants, or even freeze their assets. The largest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia has experienced a surge in Islamic fundamentalist movements that grew out of the political and economic turmoil which rocked the country in 1997–98. There has been a fundamental breakdown in law and order, as democratic institutions remain weak. The country's transition to democracy has, moreover,

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fundamentally altered the political role of the military, stripping it of its *dwi fungsi*, or dual function.

Al Qaeda has taken advantage of Indonesia's political instability, and has looked at the country as a new frontier for operations. To that end, in June 2000, two top bin Laden lieutenants, Ayman al-Zawahiri and the late Mohammed Atef, were dispatched to Indonesia and travelled to the strife-torn Maluku Islands and the province with an active secessionist movement, Aceh.[62] According to a leaked Indonesian intelligence report: "Both of them were impressed by the lack of security, the support and extent of the Muslim population" and clearly saw Indonesia as an important new base of operations. The intelligence report concluded: "This visit was part of a wider strategy of shifting the base of Osama bin Laden's terrorist operations from the subcontinent to Southeast Asia."[63]

Like the other countries in Southeast Asia, there is clearly some degree of penetration by Al Qaeda in Indonesia. There is, however, debate as to the extent of that penetration. Clearly, Indonesia is fertile recruiting ground for Al Qaeda. However, Harold Crouch has argued that concern over Al Qaeda's penetration in Indonesia is overstated. While he has acknowledged that many of the radical groups in Indonesia would probably have received money from Al Qaeda, he does not believe that the money has "decisively influenced their behaviour". He qualified this further by stating that "it is hard to believe that Indonesian radical Islamic organizations need[s] such outside assistance".[64] To date, the Indonesian Government claims not to have found any money from any of the individuals, companies, or charities that the United States has listed as having contacts with terrorist organizations.[65]

Yet, money is only one thing that a terrorist network relies on. It needs recruits and the freedom to operate and plan. Most of all, it needs to expand its links so as to have regional and global connectivity. As investigations around the world into Al Qaeda continue, Indonesia is coming under increasing criticism for its foot-dragging. For example, although large portions of the Jemaah Islamiah cells in Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines have been broken up and their leaders arrested, there have been no concurrent actions by Indonesia, and suspects wanted by Malaysia and Singapore remain at large in Indonesia, many of them operating freely.

Moreover, radical Islamic groups have proliferated in Indonesia since 1998. Though not all have Al Qaeda ties, some do and there is always the potential of linkages. Darul Islam, whose goal is to establish an Islamic state governed by *Shariah*, has some fourteen factions. Darul Islam has maintained ties with Al Qaeda for some time, including "military collaboration". These links were formed in the 1980s when

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Darul Islam members volunteered to fight in Afghanistan. Al Chaidar, one of the faction heads has admitted to receiving 1.2 billion rupiah (US$243,000) from Al Qaeda: "Yes, we've gotten funding and assistance from the bin Laden group since we went helping Afghanistan in the 1980s."[66] "The relationship between Darul Islam and Osama bin Laden is just undeniable," Chaidar continued, though qualifying his statement that only some factions had a "special relationship".

However, little is known about the Darul Islam (DI) movement; it is an illegal organization. The relationship between the fourteen factions of DI is not known, nor is its leadership structure. If any faction can make a claim to be the DI movement's natural heir, then it is probably Abu Bakar Bashir's Majelis Mujaheddin Indonesia, established in Jogyakarta in 2000, and which is itself a large umbrella organization for some smaller radical groups, including the Islamic Youth Movement (GPI), the Defenders of Islam (FPI), the Indonesian Committee for Solidarity of the Islamic World (KISDI), the Anti-Zionist Movement (GAZA), the Indonesian Muslim Students Action Front (KAMMI), Laskar Jundullah, and the Laskar Mujaheddin.

The Laskar Jihad

The Laskar Jihad, led by Umar Jafar Thalib, was founded in January 2000. Shortly after its founding, it mobilized a small army to wage a *jihad* in the Maluku Islands. Arguing that there was an international campaign to create a Christian republic in the heart of Indonesia, Thalib, in May 2000, sent several hundred fighters to the Malukus, armed with machetes and crude weapons, "so that they [Muslims] could feel safe in their own country".[67] The influx of the Laskar Jihad paramilitary tipped the balance in the Malukus in favour of the Muslims,[68] and shortly thereafter Christians were ethnically cleansed from Ternate, the north Maluku capital. In all, some 9,000 people died in the Maluku communal conflict.

That conflict served to attract radical Islamicists from around the Muslim world. For example, seven Afghans arrived in Ambon on 7 July 2000 and were spirited away by Laskar Jihad forces. They joined some 200 other Afghan, Pakistani, and Malay radicals. According to the DI's Al Chaidar, the Laskar Jihad "maintains contact with the international Mujaheddin network, including Osama bin Laden's group .... Wherever a *jihad* is in force, this network provides money and weapons and all tools needed for *jihad*, and they mobilize fighters to go to the *jihad* area. This is exactly what is happening in the Malukus. Osama bin Laden is one of those who has sent money and weapons to *jihad* fighters in the Malukus." Abu Abdul Aziz and another bin Laden lieutenant were dispatched to Ambon at the height of the Laskar Jihad's *jihad*.

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In the immediate aftermath of the 11 September attacks, the Indonesian Government put inordinate pressure on the Laskar Jihad not to take advantage of the situation by mobilizing its supporters for a *jihad* against the United States. The Indonesian military increased its presence in the Maluku Islands where, as already mentioned, the Laskar Jihad supported the sectarian violence there. Laskar Jihad leader, Thalib, went to great pains to distance himself from bin Laden and Al Qaeda, although he had never done so before. In his words: "Laskar Jihad does not have ties with Al Qaeda or any other organizations that are associated with Osama bin Laden or any form or part of his network. Laskar Jihad distances itself from Osama bin Laden and his followers."[69] Thalib has also asserted that bin Laden is "very empty about the knowledge of religion".[70]

Yet, Thalib has acknowledged that the Laskar Jihad has maintained links with Malaysia's KMM, and he has also co-ordinated his operations in Indonesia with Abu Bakar Bashir. Indeed, the Laskar Jihad attends, and is a member of, Bashir's umbrella organization, the Mujaheddin Council of Indonesia. Although Thalib was arrested in April 2002, his organization remains intact and the remainder of the Laskar Jihad's leadership remains free.

Al Qaeda Finds a Home

New ties between Indonesian radical groups and Al Qaeda are being uncovered at an alarming rate, and to the Indonesian Government's credit, it has been very helpful when dealing with foreign nationals who are wanted abroad. For example, on 11 January 2002, Indonesian authorities, at America's insistence, deported without a trial a Pakistani and Egyptian national, Hafiz Mohammed Saad Iqbal, to Egypt where he was wanted in connection with terrorist activities.[71] On 5 June 2002, the Indonesian police arrested another Al Qaeda suspect at the request of the United States — Mahmoud bin Ahmad Assegaf, also known as Omar Al-Faruq. Al-Faruq, a Kuwaiti in his early thirties, was a permanent resident in Indonesia. Labelled an Al Qaeda "financier", he ran a small Islamic charity office in Jakarta where he was an active fund-raiser. After being recruited into Al Qaeda, Al-Faruq was trained in Afghan camps for three years, beginning in 1992. In 1995, he, together with al Mughiri al Gaza'iri, an Al Qaeda camp commander, was sent by Abu Zubaydah to the Philippines.[72] There they trained MILF and Jemaah Islamiah militants at the MILF's Camp Abu Bakar. Al-Faruq is thought to have been one of Al Qaeda's key trainers at the MILF camp. In 1998–99, Al-Faruq was sent to Indonesia to take advantage of the power vacuum and breakdown of

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central government authority, to establish Al Qaeda cells. By this time, he was Al Qaeda's senior ranking official in Indonesia, and one of the top Al Qaeda commanders in all of Southeast Asia. In Indonesia, Al-Faruq worked very closely with Jemaah Islamiah and other locally affiliated Al Qaeda cells.

Beginning in mid-1999, Al-Faruq organized a series of bombings across Indonesia, that were carried out by joint Jemaah Islamiah and Al Qaeda operatives. The attacks culminated in the Christmas 2000 bombings in which eighteen people were killed and more than a hundred injured in a series of bomb attacks on churches across the archipelago. In June 2000, Al-Faruq served as the host/guide for Al Qaeda's second and third in command, Ayman al-Zawahiri and the late Mohammed Atef, during their trip to Aceh and the Malukus. Al-Faruq has admitted that he also plotted to assassinate Megawati Soekarnoputri on two occasions, in 1999 when she was the leading Indonesian presidential candidate, and in 2000 when she was Vice-President.

Al-Faruq became a close associate of a senior Indonesian JI operative, Agus Dwikarna. Dwikarna was also a senior official of the Majelis Mujaheddin of Indonesia (MMI) and the head of the Laskar Jundullah, a paramilitary group based in Sulawesi that had led sectarian conflicts against Christians, beginning in 1999. Additionally, Dwikarna was the regional head of a Saudi Arabian charity, the al Haramain Foundation, which is a major conduit of Al Qaeda funding in Southeast Asia. Al-Faruq lived near Agus Dwikarna in Makassar (outside Ujung Pandang) in south Sulawesi, and was the key backer of Dwikarna's Laskar Jundullah.

Following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, Al-Faruq planned a series of terrorist attacks on U.S. targets across Southeast Asia. He planned a seaborne suicide attack on U.S. naval vessels which were in Surabaya in May 2002 for joint training operations. He recruited a Somali Al Qaeda operative to lead the attack, but was unable to recruit enough personnel to carry it out.[73] According to the CIA, Al-Faruq was, before his arrest, also instructed by two senior Al Qaeda officials, Ibn al-Sheik al Libi and Abu Zubaydah, to carry out a series of truck bombings on U.S. embassies in Southeast Asia, on or around the anniversary of the 11 September attacks.[74] However, before he could carry out these attacks, Al-Faruq was arrested and turned over to the Americans. He is currently detained at Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan. Al-Faruq had come to American and Indonesian intelligence officials' attention in early 2002 with the arrests of Abu Zubaydah, and JI leader in the Philippines, Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi.

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The Jemaah Islamiah Network

Between 9 December 2001 and August 2002, some twenty-two people in Malaysia, thirty-six in Singapore, and nine in the Philippines were arrested as part of an Al Qaeda network — the Jemaah Islamiah — that spread across four Southeast Asian countries. Further arrests were made in the wake of the Bali attack on 12 October 2002, in which nearly 190 people were killed. The JI is a perfect example of how Al Qaeda has penetrated the region, and why any one country cannot by itself deal with international terrorism. The JI, though it has a regional agenda, is an important cog in the Al Qaeda network, and was probably being enlarged and strengthened before 11 September.

Roots of the Jemaah Islamiah

The origins of the JI are found in Indonesia, dating back to the 1960s when radical cleric Abu Bakar Bashir established a pirate radio station that advocated the imposition of *Shariah* law.[75] In 1972, Bashir and Abdullah Sungkar, a fellow cleric, established an Islamic boarding school in Solo, Al Mukmin. The school, which opened with thirty students, grew rapidly and in 1976 it moved to a four-hectare compound outside the city; it now has 1,900 students, with plans to expand. The school continued to attract more pupils, one of whom was Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, who like many other graduates, went on to study at Egypt's Al Azhar University, or in Pakistani or Saudi Arabian *madrasah*.[76] The school taught a hardline and literal interpretation of Islam based on Salafi Wahhabism and the philosophies of the nineteenth century Islamic cleric Mohammed Abdu Rahid Rida. On 19 November 1978, Bashir and Sungkar were arrested and sentenced to nine years imprisonment for violating a 1963 subversion law. A second court upheld the conviction but lessened the sentence to four years, and they were released in 1982. In 1985, the Supreme Court overturned the Appeals Court's verdict and re-imposed the original nine-year sentence; both individuals immediately fled to Malaysia. After a short period, their *pesentren* reopened.

Bashir and Sungkar found a safe haven in Malaysia where they lived and preached openly for many years, and built up a large following of radical Indonesians who had fled the Soeharto regime. The preachers lived in a small town on the Malacca Strait that had a ferry service to Indonesia. This was to serve as a way station for Indonesians and Malaysians who were on their way to Afghanistan and Pakistan to study, or to fight the Soviets, or later to train in one of the forty Al Qaeda camps that had been established in Pakistan in the late 1990s. Sungkar travelled to Pakistan and the Afghan border region in the early

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1990s where he met bin Laden and other senior Al Qaeda members, and where he pledged *bayat*, effectively absorbing his movement into Al Qaeda.

Bashir and Sungkar are revered figures with large and devoted followers. Their speeches had attacked Soeharto's New Order regime, and their demand for the implementation of *Shariah* won them a hardcore following. As Sungkar stated in a 1997 interview:

> [Soeharto], using force makes it compulsory for the Islamic community to accept Pancasila as the only foundation for the nation, political parties and organizations... His regime still applies the system "detect, defect and destroy" when applied towards the Islamic movement which it distrusts and regards as subversive.[77]

To that end, Sungkar espoused violent *jihad* to create Dawlah Islamiah. Sungkar contended that the Islamic community had to build up three strengths:

- Quwwatul Aqidah (Faith's strength)
- Quwwatul Ukhuwwah (Brotherhood's strength)
- Quwwatul Musallah (Military strength)[78]

In the process, Sungkar made clear that the Islamic community worldwide would be important contributors in the process of building up these three faiths.[79]

Sungkar and Bashir returned to their *pesentren* in Solo, Indonesia, in 1999 once the Soeharto regime collapsed and democracy was established, although Sungkar died shortly thereafter. In mid-2000, Bashir established the Majelis Mujaheddin of Indonesia based in Jogyakarta. The group is ostensibly a civil society organization that tries to implement *Shariah* peacefully and through the democratic process. However, in reality it is an umbrella organization and co-ordinating body for many militant and hardline Islamic organizations and groups which are committed to the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia. As Bashir has put it:

> The MMI is an institution where a lot of people from a lot of Muslim groups including the NU and Muhamidya gather at one table to discuss how to get our vision of sharia implemented into national laws... The long-term strategy is to get Indonesia 100 per cent based on sharia. As long as Muslims are the majority, the country should be ruled by sharia.[80]

Another member of the MMI put it this way: "I think that the MMI is no less, no more, an NGO whose goal is the empowerment of those who have experienced oppression." Yet, the MMI is thought to be a front for Abu Bakar Bashir's more militant activities. Bashir had recruited

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hundreds of followers to fight the Americans in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001 (but they were unable to leave Pakistan). The MMI was clearly part of the JI network.

Establishing the Network

Bashir and Sungkar instructed their deputies, Hambali and Abu Jibril, to establish a network of militant cells throughout Southeast Asia, beginning in 1993. Hambali has long been an Al Qaeda operative in the region, and he was a close associate of Ramzi Yousef and Wali Khan Amin Shah. On 2 June 1994, he and Wali Khan established Konsojaya SDN BHD, a front company that provided logistical services — especially the procurement of bomb-making materials — for Ramzi Yousef's Operation Bojinka. It is unclear at what point Hambali was formally recruited into Al Qaeda.

Hambali and Jibril launched an active recruiting campaign in Malaysia and Singapore. In Malaysia, recruitment focused on two key groups: Indonesian migrants/exiles and Universiti Tecknologi Malaysia (UTM) lecturers and students. UTM, located across from Singapore in Johor, has traditionally been a hotbed of Islamic radicalism. In Singapore, recruitment focused on older, more established middle-class individuals: these were well-educated people with good jobs, products of state schools, not stereotypical Islamic radicals.

Yet, membership in Jemaah Islamiah is highly selective and comprised three phases over many years. "We are not a mass organization," said one senior JI official. "We want people who will be loyal to the aims of the group."[81] The first phase involved the screening of individuals, including their family background, and knowledge of Islam. Once selected, Hambali enrolled the students at *pesentren* and *madrasah* to study Islam. Many young radicals were sent to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The third phase of the training/recruitment regimen was physical and military in nature. Some fifty individuals (nineteen out of the twenty-three arrested in Malaysia, and at least eight Singaporeans) were sent to Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. More (at least five Singaporeans) were sent to two MILF bases in Mindanao, Camp Abu Bakar, and Camp Obaida. There, they learned bomb-making, weapons training, surveillance, sabotage, communications, and cell formation.

At the heart of their recruitment was the Al Tarbiyah Luqmanul Hakiem Islamic boarding school outside the southern Malaysian city of Johor Bahru, that was purchased in the mid-1990s. The school's master, Ali Ghufron (Mukhlas), later became the head of the JI's Malaysian cell, and in 2002, the head of operations for JI. Students of this school included another Indonesian, Abdul Aziz, aka Imam Samudra, who

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went on to train in Afghanistan, and was the mastermind behind the Bali bombing.

Organizational Structure

The JI was formally established some time in 1994–95. Hambali became the chairman of its five-member Regional Advisory Council (*syurah*). Other members included Mohammed Iqbal Rahman (Abu Jibril), Abu Hanifah, and Faiz bin Abu Bakar Bafana. Bafana, a Malaysian businessman and former Singaporean, was a key aide to Hambali. He ran a large construction firm in Malaysia, Marebina, and was an important financial backer of the JI. Below the Regional Advisory Council, Hambali appointed several lieutenants to establish cells in their respective countries. Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi established a cell in the Philippines; Ibrahim bin Maidin set up the Singapore cell; Abdussalam bin Abu Thalib ran the Malaysian cell; and Irfan Suryahadi Anwas, the younger brother of Abu Jibril, organized the Indonesian cell, and was the head of the MMI. Each cell in turn had several sub-cells (*fiah*).

The JI cells in each of the four countries — Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines — were fairly independent of each other and clearly had very specific functions. Each took advantage of certain socioeconomic, socio-political, geographical, and demographic aspects of their host state to develop and plan operations. Although some funding was raised locally, much came from abroad. According to Malaysian and Singapore intelligence, the JI has received some RP1.35 billion from Al Qaeda since 1996. That year, the JI received RP250 million, RP400 million in 1997, and RP700 million in 2000.[82]

The Malaysian Cell

With an estimated 200 members, the Malaysian cell is the largest in the JI network. It is led by Abu Hanafiah and Faiz bin Abu Bakar Bafana. At least thirteen members were trained in Afghanistan, others were trained at an MILF camp in Mindanao. The Malaysian JI cell recruited actively among both Indonesian exiles and educated Malays. At least five senior JI members and recruiters were lecturers in the UTM. The twenty-two suspects who have been arrested in Malaysia are well-educated; twelve have university degrees, five are from institutions in the United States, Great Britain, and Indonesia, and the remainder from Malaysian universities.

The Malaysian JI cell had five discernible functions. It acted, first, as a liaison with the KMM in Malaysia, with whom there was considerable overlap in membership, but it also served as a major conduit between the JI and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. The Malaysian

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cell was the logistical hub for dispatching JI operatives to Afghanistan for training. Hambali secured visas for JI members by getting them "enrolled" in Pakistani *madrasah*. In all, it is said that more than 1,000 JI operatives from Southeast Asia were sent to Afghanistan.

Secondly, the Malaysian cell was responsible for establishing several front companies that could be used to channel Al Qaeda funds and procure weapons and bomb-making materiel. In addition to Konsojaya, established on 2 June 1994, there were three other front companies that have been discovered and run by Al Qaeda in Malaysia:

- Green Laboratory Medicine SDN BHD, established on 6 October 1993.
- Infocus Technology SDN BHD, established on 13 July 1995, and
- Secure Valley SDN BHD, established on 4 October 1996

Thirdly, the Malaysian cell, under the leadership of Abu Jibril, was also the centre of the Maluku *jihad* activities. Jibril not only raised funds for the *jihad*, but led several hundred *jihadis* there bearing automatic weapons. Though most of those weapons were procured by JI operatives in the Philippines, the Malaysian cell also procured weapons in southern Thailand. Jibril co-ordinated his activities with Umar Jafar Thalib of Indonesia's Laskar Jihad, who was in overall command of *jihadi* forces in the Malukus.

Fourthly, the Malaysian cell was responsible for procuring large quantities of ammonium nitrate, a chemical fertilizer used in bombs. Ammonium nitrate is not commonly found in Singapore, though it is readily available in Malaysia. There, one tonne of the substance costs approximately S$400-500. In October 2000, the Malaysian cell had already procured and transferred some 4 tonnes of ammonium nitrate to the cell in Singapore where it planned to target U.S. interests; 17 more tonnes were to be purchased and delivered, but the cell was broken up before the deal was finalized.

The fifth function of the Malaysian cell was to run a camp in Negri Sembilan, in southern Malaysia, that was used by both the Malaysian and Singapore cells for training new recruits.

The Philippine Cell

The Philippine cell was a major logistics cell for the JI network, responsible for acquiring explosives, guns, and other equipment. Its leader was Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, also known as Mike. Born on 17 February 1971 in Central Java, al-Ghozi, as a child, had studied at Abu Bakar Bashir's *pesentren*, Al Mukmin (1984–90), before going on to study in a Pakistani *madrasah* for six years (1990–95), when he was recruited into Al Qaeda by a Malaysian businessman, and a member

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of the JI Regional Advisory Council, Faiz bin Abu Bakar Bafana. Al-Ghozi was trained by Al Qaeda in Afghanistan in 1993–94, where he was introduced to several MILF personnel, and was sent to the Philippines in late 1995 to early 1996 to establish contacts and set up a cell.

Al-Ghozi was also responsible for liaising with the MILF. In December 1996, al-Ghozi travelled to the MILF headquarters, Camp Abu Bakar, to train MILF and JI personnel in bomb-making. His key contact was Sulaiman, an MILF cadre who had trained with al-Ghozi in an Al Qaeda camp in Afghanistan. Sulaiman appears to be responsible for international operations for the MILF.

During the next three years, al-Ghozi was in and out of the Philippines. He was sent back to the Philippines in March 1998 for six months, where he conducted another bomb-making course for MILF and JI personnel.[83] He returned to Indonesia, after applying for a Philippine passport in the name of Randy Andam Alib. Al-Ghozi was then ordered to procure a significant quantity of explosives for JI operations. In addition to explosives, al-Ghozi was responsible for the purchase of light arms and assault rifles. These were shipped to Poso, for Agus Dwikarna's Laskar Jundullah and for Abu Jibril's *jihad* in Ambon. In mid-2001, the Malaysian coastguard intercepted a vessel carrying a huge cache of mainly M-16 rifles *en route* from Zamboanga to Ambon.

The Philippine cell may also have been a conduit for financial transfers to the JI. The cell was also instrumental in arranging the training of JI/KMM members in MILF camps, as well as being a conduit for JI contributions to the MILF.

The Indonesian Cell

The least is known about the Indonesian cell, which is connected to Abu Bakar Bashir's MMI. The MMI is the key liaison between Bashir and the JI regional network, though this was denied by both Bashir and Indonesian police intelligence officials. Bashir completely denies the existence of the JI, saying that it is the creation of Malaysian and Singapore intelligence, while Indonesian police intelligence officials acknowledge JI's presence elsewhere in Southeast Asia but deny its existence in Indonesia.[84]

Bashir is the *amir*, the spiritual leader of JI. Below him is Fikri Sugundo, the JI secretary, a close lieutenant and Master of the elementary school of the Al Mukmin *pesentren*. The Indonesian JI cell is most likely headed by Irfan S. Awwas, the younger brother of Abu Jibril. Awwas is the director of the MMI and is in regular contact with radicals in the organization. He is also the chairman of Hiddyatullah Press and

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Wihdah Press, two MMI-owned publishing houses that produce radical Islamic texts and anti-American and anti-Zionist tracts.

In addition to its spiritual and leadership role, the MMI has other functions. First, senior Al Qaeda leaders have travelled to Indonesia and have liaised with Bashir's men, in particular Agus Dwikarna and Al Qaeda's top officer in Indonesia, and perhaps all of Southeast Asia, Omar Al-Faruq.

In October 2001, Indonesian intelligence officials discovered a document in Solo entitled "Operation Jibril". The fifteen-page document was signed by JI chairman Abu Hanafiah and JI secretary Fikri Sugundo, and called for the simultaneous bombings of the U.S. embassies in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. Subsequently, Indonesian intelligence officials decided that the document was probably a fabrication.[85] JI operatives have engaged in several terrorist acts in Indonesia, including the Christmas 2000 bombing of churches across Indonesia. JI operatives have also conducted "sweeps" in Solo, and have engaged in militant activities against Christian communities in the Malukus and Poso.

An important affiliate of the MMI is the Laskar Jundullah, a small militant organization that has conducted "sweeps" of foreigners in Solo, and has been at the forefront of the sectarian conflict in Poso. Laskar Jundullah has close links with the JI cell in the Philippines, which has supplied it with small arms and automatic weapons.

The Indonesian JI cell emerges as the most important cell after the Malaysian and Singapore governments' severe measures and arrests in late 2001 to 2002 of JI cells in both countries. With those cells under siege, many JI members fled to Indonesia where the JI network has consolidated its position and expanded.

The Singapore Cell

The Singapore cell was the major operational unit of the Southeast Asian JI network, tasked with planning and co-ordinating attacks. Some thirty-six JI members were arrested by Singapore authorities in two operations between December 2001 and August 2002, and more such arrests can be expected. The Singapore cell was first headed by Ibrahim bin Maidin (Qoaid Wakalah), a 51-year-old superintendent of an apartment building. He had no formal religious training but was trained by Bashir, Hambali, Sungkar, and Abu Jibril, all of whom frequently visited Singapore to preach to followers in private sessions. Maidin had trained in Afghanistan in 1993. He recruited almost all the Singapore JI members through a religious class that he taught in private residences.

Before it was broken up by the Singapore security and intelligence services, the Singapore cell had an estimated sixty to eighty members,

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though no more than twenty-five active operatives. In December 2001, thirteen operatives were arrested, while two others, found to be supporters of the MILF, were put under restrictive orders. Maidin became the *amir* of the group, while his successor, Mas Salamat Kastari, and four others fled to Indonesia. In addition to these five, Singapore intelligence officials believe seven or eight others escaped; roughly half the cell was broken up. However, this was an under-estimation and in August 2002, eighteen other JI members were arrested, though they were described as merely "foot-soldiers".

There are a few important characteristics of the Singapore JI members: most were educated, middle-class men, with no prior leanings to radical Islam. They were not seen in local mosques, preferring instead to congregate together, as the local mosques did not espouse *Wahhibism*. The Singapore JI cell was extremely secretive and was not discovered until late 2001. According to the Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs, "Several of those arrested had been to Afghanistan where they received short periods of training in Al Qaeda terrorist camps." At least five were trained in MILF camps. Most took time off from their jobs in Singapore, stating that they were going on a *haj* to Mecca. Of the second group of eighteen detained in August 2002, twelve had served in the Singapore Armed Forces as part of compulsory National Service, and all were educated in Singapore schools. They ranged in age (from 30 to 54) and in educational levels.

The Singapore JI cell had five functional units: operations, security, missionary work, fund-raising, and communications. Below the operations unit, there were three sub-cells, or *fiah* — each tasked with surveilling different targets: *Fiah Ayub*, *Fiah Musa*, and *Fiah Ismail*.

Fiah Ayub was led by Mohammed Khalim Jaffar, a 39-year-old printer, who met Maidin in 1989–90 and was trained by Al Qaeda in Afghanistan from September 1999 to April 2000. He was a local JI trainer. This sub-cell was tasked with developing two separate attacks: the bombing of a subway station (Yishun MRT station) where a shuttle bus regularly picked up U.S. naval personnel and brought them to the Sembawang wharf, where a U.S. Navy logistics facility is located. The second plan was a *USS Cole*-styled suicide attack on a U.S. Navy vessel in the narrow channel between Changi, on the eastern coastline of Singapore, and the offshore island of Pulau Tekong. Jaffar also had a listing of more than 200 U.S. firms operating in Singapore, and had marked three as potential targets of bombings. A video-tape, narrated by a cell member, Hashim bin Abas, an electrical engineer and the cell's treasurer, of the surveillance of the Yishun MRT subway station was found in the rubble of Mohammed Attef's house in Kabul, after the defeat of the Taliban in early 2002. The prospective attack on this "soft target" was planned back in 1997 but never executed.

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Fiah Musa was led by Mohammed Ellias, a 29-year-old manager, and Mohammed Nazir Mohammed, a 27-year-old ship traffic assistant. This *Fiah* was tasked to bomb the U.S. and Israeli embassies, as well as the British and Australian High Commissions in Singapore. *Fiah Musa* was instructed to procure 21 tonnes of ammonium nitrate and secure warehouse space that could be used to make truck bombs. It was instructed by Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi in bomb construction. Six Al Qaeda suicide bombers were to arrive from the Middle East to carry out the truck bombings. This *Fiah* had also instructed one of its members, Andrew Gerard, a 34-year-old aerospace technician at Singapore Technologies, to photograph and find suitable targets at Singapore's Paya Lebar Air Base, which is used by U.S. military aircraft deployed there on a rotational basis. In addition to Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, this *Fiah* was assisted by a Canadian of Kuwaiti descent, Mohammed Mansur Jabarah, who surveilled different targets in Singapore in October 2001.[86]

Fiah Ismail was the smallest and newest cell, formed after 11 September. It was led by Galim Hussain, a 41-year-old supervisor, and was told to identify suitable U.S. commercial targets in Singapore.

What is significant about the Singapore JI cell is that almost all of the plans for its attacks were at an operational stage, just before the cell was broken up. A report in *Jane's Intelligence Review* stated that Osama bin Laden had personally called off the attacks.[87] According to Singapore's Internal Security Department, each of the *fiahs* "see their role as mainly providing logistical and other support to foreign terrorist elements who would determine when and what to attack".

One of the most important functions of the Singapore cell was fund-raising. Members of the Singapore JI cell donated 2 per cent of their salaries to the JI in the early 1990s; and 5 per cent by the end of the decade. Singapore investigators believed that 25 per cent of the funds raised were given to the Malaysian JI cell, and 25 per cent to the Indonesian cell. The transfers were conducted by individuals. The remaining funds were used by the Singapore JI *fiahs* for equipment, operations, and overseas training. The Singapore JI cell was also very much involved in fund-raising for the MILF. Of the thirty-six people detained in Singapore between December 2001 and August 2002, four were found to be not JI members, but active supporters and fund-raisers for the MILF.

Consolidating in Indonesia

While officials in Singapore and Malaysia have eradicated much of the senior Jemaah Islamiya leadership in their own countries since December 1991, both have expressed tremendous frustration about the lack of

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co-operation that they have received from Indonesian authorities — at least, until the Bali attack. Although Abu Bakar Bashir was named by both Malaysia and Singapore as a prime suspect and a leader of the Jemaah Islamiah network, he was allowed to live and preach openly. JI activity in Indonesia stepped up, culminating in the Bali bombings of 12 October 2002, in which the mastermind and two other arrested suspects are said to have close links with Bashir.

The Rabitatul Mujaheddin and Al Qaeda's Forays into Thailand and Myanmar

The senior-most Al Qaeda leader in Southeast Asia, Omar Al-Faruq, has admitted in interrogation, that the Jemaah Islamiah had tried to establish links with Muslim militants in Thailand and Myanmar.[88] In 1999, Abu Bakar Bashir established a co-ordinating body, known as the Rabitatul Mujaheddin (RM). RM was erroneously first described by the CNN as the armed wing of the Jemaah Islamiah, but in reality, it was simply a group of JI/MMI officials meeting with other regional militants.

Al Qaeda in Thailand

There have never been strong ties between the Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand and international terrorist groups. Though militants in southern Thailand have long been a fact of life, for the most part they have given up their campaign to create an independent homeland. Some have worked as logistics operatives for Acehnese rebels and the MILF, serving as an important financial and arms conduit. It is clear that Al Qaeda operatives have used Thailand as a base of operations for nearly a decade. Ramzi Yousef and many other Al Qaeda operatives have passed through Thailand. After the 11 September attacks, Thai Supreme Commander General Surayud Chulanond admitted that military intelligence was monitoring a "small number" of bin Laden operatives in Thailand, and that the government was cognizant of "Countries in the Middle East provid[ing] training, education and financial support for fundamentalist groups in the south [of Thailand]."[89]

There are two very small Thai groups, the Wae Ka Raeh (WKR) and the Guragan Mujaheddin Islam Pattani, that are thought to have some ties with the Jemaah Islamiah and Al Qaeda; and the head of the WKR fought with the Mujaheddin in Afghanistan. For the most part, however, they are criminal gangs. The WKR is thought to earn Bt10 million a year in contract killings and "enforcement".[90] It is evident from the confessions of Omar Al-Faruq that the JI was rapidly trying to expand its contacts with the Guragan Mujaheddin. Yet, the Guragan Mujaheddin remains a small and poorly funded organization, with only about a

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hundred members. Another Thai-Muslim militant group, the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO), is suspected of having ties with the Abu Sayyaf.

Yet, Thailand is an important base for terrorist operations for much the same reasons as the Philippines: it is a nation of convenience. Thailand is surrounded by countries that have been mired in war and ongoing insurgencies. The Thai military has close ties with the Myanmar and Chinese military establishments, that have been important conduits for weapons. The leader of the Kumpulan Mujaheddin Malaysia, who was arrested in August 2001, was reported to have bought large quantities of weapons in Thailand.[91]

Secondly, Thailand has been trying to become an international banking centre, although it has a weak regulatory system. A considerable amount of money flows between Thailand and the Middle East, and trade has grown significantly between the two. Corruption is endemic in the Thai Government and police force. Because of Thailand's place in the international drug trade, there is a culture of money-laundering, corruption, and operating in the shadows. According to the Thai Government, some Bt100 billion in drug money is laundered annually through financial institutions in Thailand. In March 2002, Thai authorities arrested twenty-five Middle Eastern men suspected of laundering Al Qaeda funds in the Kingdom. In 2002, intelligence officials noted that Thai immigration authorities had detained on average one person a day for travelling with forged documentation.[92]

Finally, Thailand is an international transport hub with easy international access. It has relatively lax immigration procedures and tourist-friendly visa requirements. It is a convenient country to facilitate financial transactions, transit, and network — factors useful to a terrorist organization such as Al Qaeda.

The Myanmar Connection

There is little information about the Al Qaeda network in Myanmar, but its nationals have been identified as Al Qaeda terrorists. Indeed, the largest Al Qaeda cell in Southeast Asia is said to be in Myanmar, although Myanmar's links are much closer to Al Qaeda networks in South Asia.[93] Myanmar does not offer terrorists the infrastructure they need, especially the ability to set up front companies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), nor is it a travel hub. Even if that is an over-estimation, there are a few disturbing signs.

Al Qaeda has long been established in neighbouring Bangladesh, where thousands of Muslims from Myanmar have taken refuge from the Myanmar military government's systematic repression of its Muslim ethnic minorities, the Bengalis, Rohingas, and Kachin. Muslims account

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for roughly 4 per cent of Myanmar's population. Currently, there are three Muslim-based guerrilla movements in Myanmar: the Ommat Liberation Front, the Kawthoolei Muslim Liberation Front, and the Muslim Liberation Organization of Burma. The government has waged a harsh counter-insurgency against these groups, and has at times tacitly supported local militias to engage in communal violence against local Muslims.

As long as the Myanmar junta continues to repress the Muslim minorities to the extent that it does, it can be expected that those minorities will attempt to reach out to any external group or state that will provide them with some assistance. That said, to date most of the Al Qaeda activity in Myanmar is less oriented towards Southeast Asia than it is to the India-Pakistan-Kashmir region.

Conclusion

One of the things that Al Qaeda has managed to do so successfully in Southeast Asia has been to graft onto or co-opt pre-existing radicals, radical movements, and groups. This raises two large and disturbing issues. The first is, at what point do parochial radicals, who had otherwise been concerned with a localized political grievance, become internationalists? At what point did they take their struggle to the next, higher, level? And how did that process occur? The second issue is, in what way did being linked to an organization such as Al Qaeda affect a movement such as the MILF, which otherwise enjoys considerable popular support and has a high degree of political legitimacy? Does it move away from a national liberation group when it crosses the line and engages in, or supports, international terrorism? These are important, if imponderable, questions for another article to examine and throw light on. This will then provide a fuller picture of Al Qaeda activity in Southeast Asia.

NOTES

1. Anthony Shadid and Michael Kranish, "Gains Slow in Global Probe of Al Qaeda", *Boston Globe*, 2 December 2001, pp. A1, 28.
2. John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt, and Michele Zanini, "Networks, Netwar and Information-Age Terrorism", in *Countering the New Terrorism*, edited by Ian O. Lesser, et al. (Washington: Rand Corporation, 1999), p. 49.
3. Ibid., p. 51.
4. Phil Hirschkorn, Rohan Gunaratna, Ed Blanche and Stefan Leader, "Blowback: The Origins of Al Qaeda", *Jane's Intelligence Review* 13, no. 8 (August 2001).
5. Arquilla et al., op. cit., p. 61.

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6. Muslims are required to pay 2.5 per cent of their income in *zakat* (alms) each year. It is estimated that $1.6 million per day is donated by wealthy Saudis alone. During the war against the Soviets, the Saudis established three charities: the Islamic International Relief Organization, the Al Hamaran Foundation, and the Islamic Relief Agency. Al Qaeda has established many more since then. Mark Hubard, "Bankrolling Bin Laden", *Financial Times*, 28 November 2001.
7. Peter Ford, "Al Qaeda's Veil Begins to Lift", *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 December 2001.
8. Ibid.
9. Richard Engel, "Inside Al-Qaeda: A Window into the World of Militant Islam and the Afghani Alumni", *Janes Online*, 28 September 2001.
10. Ford, op. cit.
11. Yonah Alexander, and Michael S. Swetnam, *Usama bin Laden's* al-Qaida: *Profile of a Terrorist Network* (Ardsley, NY: Transnational Publishers, 2001), p. 20.
12. See Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 129. According to Rashid, for Pakistan, this policy cemented Islamic unity and turned Pakistan into a leader of the Islamic world. For the United States, it served as propaganda to demonstrate that the entire Muslim world was against the Soviet Union.
13. Simon Reeve, *The New Jackals* (Boston: Northeast University Press, 1999), p. 226.
14. In early 2002, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf announced that he would implement new policies to oversee the 6,000 *madrasah*, which "propagate hatred and violence" and "produce semi-literate religious scholars". Pakistan has recently pledged to reduce the number of foreign students attending Pakistani *madrasah* by 60 per cent. Michael Richardson, "Asians Taking a Closer Look at Islamic Schools", *International Herald Tribune*, 12 February 2002; and Douglas Jehl, "Pakistan to Expel Foreign Religious Students," *New York Times*, 9 March 2002, A8.
15. Rashid, op. cit., pp. 17–30.
16. *Pribumi* is the Indonesian term for a native Muslim. *Bumiputra*, literally, "Son of the Soil" is the term for indigenous Muslim Malays. The distinction is mainly aimed at the ethnic Chinese minorities in those two countries. In Malaysia, Chinese comprise approximately 20 per cent of the population, while in Indonesia, they account for some 5 per cent of the population; yet in both cases they control a disproportionate amount of their respective country's wealth.
17. The goal of the New Economic Policy (NEP), as it was titled, was to ensure that Malays (who comprise two-thirds of the population) were able to account for one-third of economic assets. Over thirty years later, although there were significant improvements in the socio-economic position of Malays, the original goals of the NEP have still not been met.
18. Keith Krause, ed., *Small Arms Survey 2001: Profiling the Problem* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 20.
19. Tim Weiner, "American Action is Held Likely in the Philippines and in Indonesia", *New York Times*, 10 October 2001, A1.
20. Interview with a colonel in the PNP-PSG, Makati, Philippines, 15 January 2002. Technically speaking, the MILF was not formed until 1984, but Salamat Hashim had already split with the MNLF in December 1977, moved his headquarters to Lahore, Pakistan, and led the "New Leadership" wing of the MNLF until the MILF was formally established. For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to the "New Leadership" faction of the MNLF as the MILF.
21. Department of the Interior and Local Government, "Country Report of the Republic of the Philippines" (Paper presented at the International Conference on Counter Terrorism, Baguio City, Philippines, 18–21 February 1996), p. 5.

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22. Ibid., p. 6.
23. The second of Khalifa's four wives is the older sister of bin Laden.
24. Department of National Defense, *The Philippine Campaign Against Terrorism* (Quezon City: Camp Aguinaldo, 2001).
25. The Philippine National Police intelligence report does not mention Malaysia, which is surprising. It may be an oversight. See PNP, "After Intelligence Operations Report", Camp Crame, Quezon City, Philippines, 27 February 1995.
26. Dr Adnan Khalil Basha, "Largest Islamic Relief Organization Maligned," Letter to the Editor, *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (*PDI*), August 2000.
27. Christine Herrera, "Gemma Linked to Bin Laden Group Funding Sayyaf, MILF," *PDI*, 10 August 2000. Based on IIRO documents at the Securities and Exchange Commission, Khalifa was one of five incorporators who signed the documents of registration. Only one was a non-Muslim. One of the five was a Filipino named Alice "Jameelah" Yabo, believed to be Khalifa's wife.
28. Interview with a counter-intelligence official, Quezon City, 16 January 2002.
29. Christine Herrera, "Bin Laden Funds Abu Sayyaf Through Muslim Relief Group", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.
30. Interview with a captain of the AFP intelligence, Marawi, Philippines, 11 January 2002.
31. Interview with Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesman, Cotabato, 9 January 2002.
32. Interview with Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesman, Cotabato, 9 January 2002.
33. Lira Lalangin, "Bin Laden Seen Recruiting Ex-MILF", *PDI*, 24 October 2001.
34. Interview with Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesman, Cotabato, 9 January 2002. Asked to comment on the reports from the government that they found "foreigners" in camps that they had overtaken, Eid Kabalu stated that it was actually a mistake by President Estrada. Estrada, according to Kabalu, was trying to denigrate the MILF and said that they were "not even Filipinos." This actually pleased the MILF at the time, because they thought that Estrada had actually publicly acknowledged that the Bangsamoro people were their own nation.
35. Raymond Burgos, "FBI Seeks Philippine Help in Hunting Down Terrorists", *PDI*, 30 September 2001.
36. Luz Baguioro, "JI Militants May Have Links with Separatist Group," *Straits Times*, 18 September 2002.
37. Interview with a counter-intelligence official, Quezon City, 16 January 2002. This official stated that one was a Jordanian, the other a Palestinian.
38. Interview with a captain of the AFP intelligence, Marawi, Philippines, 11 January 2002.
39. Interview with a Colonel in the PNP intelligence, Manila, 27 June 2002.
40. Janjalani was born on Basilan island, and was encouraged to study Islamic law in Saudi Arabia. He emerged in Afghanistan.
41. One source called his father an *ustadz*, but that term was really reserved for the *ulama* who were trained abroad and returned to the Philippines. My source did not know if his father was an *ustadz*.
42. Department of the Interior and Local Government, "Country Report of the Republic of the Philippines", p. 6.
43. Reeve, op. cit., p. 156.
44. Ibid., p. 136.
45. Edwin Angeles, aka Yusuf Ibrahim, fought the Soviets in Afghanistan. Following his return to the Philippines in 1991, he was captured by PNP/AFP forces, and recruited to serve as a double agent for the government. He was released and rejoined the ASG, but was killed soon after (most likely by the ASG).
46. Rohan Gunaratna, "The Evolution and Tactics of the Abu Sayyaf Group", *Jane's Intelligence Review* (July 2001).

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47. Donald G. McNeil, Jr., "Belgium Seeks Arms Deals With Suspected Qaeda Ties", *New York Times*, 27 February 2002.
48. Tim McGirk, "Perpetually Perilous," *Time Asia*, 18 June 2001.
49. PNP, *After Intelligence Operations Report*, Camp Crame, Quezon City, Philippines, 27 February 1995.
50. Interview with a Colonel in the PNP-PSG, Makati, 15 January 2002; PNP, *After Intelligence Operations Report*, Camp Crame, Quezon City, Philippines, 27 February 1995.
51. In the Miller interview, bin Laden stated "As to what you say about him working for me, I have nothing to say."
52. When arrested he was found with seven passports, most bearing the same picture of him, but only the Afghan passport had his real name, while the others used aliases. In the Philippines, he used the name Osama (Ausama) Asmorai.
53. On 1 December 1994, Wali Khan Amin Shah also tested one of the bombs in the Greenbelt Theatre in Manila. No one was killed in the blast, although several people were injured.
54. For details, see Reeve, op. cit., pp. 90–91.
55. Yossef Bodansky, *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America* (New York: Forum, 1999), p. 114.
56. I would like to thank an unnamed friend for bringing this to my attention.
57. Tawfiq bin Attash, aka Khallad, was arrested in Yemen in 1996 on suspicion of terrorist connections, but was later released. A Yemeni by birth, he holds Saudi citizenship. Tawfiq was the head of bin Laden's bodyguards and became one of his chief emissaries. His whereabouts now are unknown.
58. Joceline Tan, "PAS Worried by Possible Islamic Link to US Attacks", *Straits Times*, 17 September 2001.
59. Associated Press, "Malaysia Uncovers Plots Against U.S.", 9 December 2001.
60. Patrick Sennyah, Ainon Mohd and Hayati Hayatudin, "KMM's Opposition Link", *New Straits Times*, 12 October 2001.
61. The 42-year-old religious teacher, Ahmad Jinbaz Mukhlis Mokhtar Ghazali, was detained on 2 February 2002. Another "religious official" was detained after being caught with a large cache of ammunition and Indonesian passports in Perak State on 2 March 2002.
62. Atef was the head of Al Qaeda's military operations, and was responsible for the suicide attack on the *USS Cole*. Ayman was the head of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, and was responsible for the murder of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. Gunaratna, "Al Qaeda: The Asian Connection", *Jane's Intelligence Review* (2002).
63. CNN, "Intel Report: Bin Laden Sought Indonesian Base", 9 July 2002. The two were accompanied by a high-ranking Indonesian militant, Agus Dwikarna, and a Kuwaiti permanent resident in Indonesia, Omar Al-Faruq, an important Al Qaeda financier in the region.
64. Harold Crouch, "Qaeda in Indonesia? The Evidence Doesn't Support Worries", *International Herald Tribune*, 23 October 2001.
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Transition Pathways and Democratic Consolidation in Post-Marcos Philippines

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This article examines the political legacies of the transition process from authoritarian to democratic rule in the Philippines and their impact on the process of democratic consolidation. The consolidation process has been particularly difficult because of a combination of the following factors: a state with weak capacities, a vibrant but contentious civil society, and a slow growth economy that has accentuated class, regional, and religious cleavages. In the post-Marcos era, an outstanding feature of the consolidation process, however, has been the unusual ability of militant social movements to be part of the broader process of democratic incorporation through the electoral party-list system while maintaining their contentious politics of claim-making on behalf of marginalized sectors. This unique feature constitutes an important aspect of the consolidation process that the state needs to address, particularly in the context of its capacity-building efforts.

Introduction

Sixteen years after the restoration of formal democratic rule in the Philippines with the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, the country faces a difficult and contentious process of democratic consolidation. The country continues to contend with armed challenges from a communist-led movement and various Muslim movements, with no easy resolution in sight. In a region that was the world's fastest growing economy before the Asian economic crisis, the Philippine economy has also lagged far behind the major ASEAN countries.

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Two presidential turnover elections, normally important indicators of democratic consolidation, took place in 1992 and 1998. However, this process took an unexpected twist in 2001 when a massive people's mobilization, climaxed by the military's withdrawal of support, deposed the elected incumbent President, Joseph Estrada, less than halfway to his six-year term. In turn, Estrada's successor, former Vice-President Gloria Arroyo, barely three months in office, had to quell a violent march on the presidential palace by enraged Estrada supporters from the poorest classes.

The broad features of the problems and challenges of democratic consolidation in the Philippines include a volatile ensemble of the following factors: a cycle of contentious politics in a state with weak capacities and political institutions, a slow-growth economy, and a vibrant but contentious civil society. In this article, three interrelated problems are addressed. First, the historical and social foundations of democratic rule in the country, and the political legacies of the transition process from authoritarian to democratic rule that continue to shape the dynamics of the consolidation process will be addressed. Second, the problems of the consolidation process focusing on the roots and dynamics of contentious politics in the country, particularly the role played by armed movements and militant social movements, will be examined. Third, new forces and players at work in the society in the process of state capability building and democratization will be identified.

The Social and Historical Foundations of Democratic Rule in the Philippines

To understand the complex interaction of state and society which underpins the process of modern democratic rule, one needs to situate this in the colonial context when the beginnings of limited partial elections were first introduced. Elections at the municipal level were introduced at the twilight of Spanish rule in the late nineteenth century but this was a highly restrictive process involving only the local élites. The revolutionary Philippine Republic, established in 1898, also had a system of elected municipal and provincial officials but its operation was cut short by the American colonial occupation. Reflecting the "fusion of expediency and ideals" of the time, the American colonial government introduced a system of regular elections starting at the local levels of government in 1901, members of the national legislature in 1907, and a president during the Commonwealth period to facilitate colonial rule by co-opting the native élites.[1]

The American colonial strategy of gradually putting the native élites into power through electoral contests had the following major

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results.[2] By prioritizing the establishment of the institutions of representative electoral democracy, the colonial government legitimized élite rule, further entrenching the power of local élite families who were able to control the electoral process. This preoccupation with electoral democracy not only increased the power of local bosses and provincial lords but also encouraged patronage-driven corruption since the control of public resources became an essential tool for winning elections. Finally, this same preoccupation with electoral democracy undermined the building of autonomous national political institutions, such as the various agencies of the civilian bureaucracy and the police, resulting in a weak and politicized administrative state apparatus.

One crucial long-term consequence of the Spanish and American colonial legacy of a relatively weak central state lies in the existence of a much larger political space for civil society. Institutions such as the highly influential Catholic church, powerful business groups, popular movements ranging from religious communities to political movements, as well as resilient local warlords and political clans, have traditionally enjoyed a large degree of autonomy from state control. This also means that powerful groups in civil society with authoritarian tendencies and partisan, parochial interests have greater leeway to entrench their interests and pursue partisan projects. Finally, while providing a common language and rules among established élites for contesting political power, electoral democracy in the Philippines has not succeeded in fully incorporating the oppositional challenges of dissident élites and mass-based movements, as shown by the persistence of armed movements and the extra-constitutional militancy of various social movements.

In his now classic model of transition to democracy, Rustow identified four phases in the process: developing a sense of national unity; a prolonged struggle over important socio-economic-political issues; a decision phase resulting in the institutionalization of some crucial aspect of democratic procedure; and a habituation phase where both officials and citizens willingly submit to the democratic rules of contestation.[3] Further stressing the importance of national unity as the "background condition of the democratization process" Rustow remarked that: "The hardest struggles in a democracy are those against the birth defects of the political community."[4] Following Rustow's framework, the Philippine democratization project is best described as a colonially rooted installation of formal democratic rules of contestation lacking the initial nourishing environment of a working national unity. Moreover, the predicted prolonged struggle over fundamental issues, including the resolution of deep class, religious, and linguistic-regional cleavages, has not found a reasonable closure. In its most stark form,

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this intractable problem resonates in the continuing communist and Muslim armed movements and related contentious collective political struggles. Lacking national unity and failing in effectively addressing the conflict endemic to the birthing process of democratic polities, the habituation phase to the rules and civilities of a democratic order has yet to take root.

Political Legacies of the Transition Process

The almost fifteen years of authoritarian rule by Ferdinand Marcos (1972–86) after five regular national and local elections between 1946 and 1969 dramatized the fragility of democratic rule in the country.[5] Festering structural problems and contentious militant politics provided Marcos a justification to declare martial rule in 1972. Barred by the old constitution from running for a third term, Marcos invoked the extraordinary powers granted by the same constitution to deal with a situation marked increasingly by acute class and ethnic conflicts (particularly in Mindanao), a worsening economic crisis, and the growing challenge of militant popular-based movements mediated primarily through a re-established new Communist Party (CPP) and a new, armed Muslim movement, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

Marcos sought to strengthen and centralize state powers in the office of the presidency as the political underpinning for an ambitious project to jump-start economic development through a debt-driven strategy of growth (accessing cheap foreign loans) and crony-control of selected key industries, such as the sugar and coconut industries. Initially successful with the rise of the world prices of agricultural exports in the seventies, the economic strategy proved unsustainable with the massive corruption and plunder of public resources by the Marcos family and its cronies and the eruption of mass opposition to the regime by the eighties. Ironically, the attempt by Marcos to centralize state powers and weaken local power-holders further strengthened both the legal and underground militant civil society movement that facilitated the fall of the dictatorship.

The Philippine transition process saw the actual replacement of the dictatorship by a broadly unified anti-Marcos élite grouping through the combination of a military mutiny and massive civilian resistance.[6] However, the ouster of Marcos was preceded by long years of combined armed resistance and legal struggles that built up the popular infrastructure of massive mobilization. The opposition to authoritarian rule demonstrated the extraordinary vibrancy of a civil society constituency that was never crushed by Marcos. It ranged from the armed struggle waged by the new CPP and the Muslim resistance in the

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southern part of the country, the anti-dictatorship activities of significant segments of the clergy from the Catholic, Protestant, and Aglipayan churches, the organizing activities and mobilizations waged by youth and student groups, labour unions and various people's organizations of the urban poor, peasants, women, and professionals such as teachers and lawyers, and dissident media groups.

Martial rule crippled the traditional legal political parties until Marcos sponsored a manipulated election in 1978 to set up a sham Parliament. This initially provided an opening for the traditional élite politicians to reorganize under the leadership of former Senator Benigno Aquino, who was then under detention but led the opposition candidates who ran in the Metro Manila area. It was the assassination of Aquino in Manila on 21 August 1983 upon his return from exile in the United States that triggered the forging of a broad coalition of opposition forces, including both left-wing and moderate forces, and also sparked divisions within the ruling élite.

A key process to the unravelling of authoritarian rule took place with the fracturing of its internal unity when a mutinous faction of the military emerged. Led by graduates of the Philippine Military Academy, this faction, Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM), was nurtured by then Defence Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile. In the last years of the regime, Enrile was engaged in a power struggle with a bloc led by Imelda Marcos and General Fabian Ver, Marcos' chief of security and closest military confidant. The RAM elements decried the corruption and lack of professionalism within the military in the escalating war against communist and Muslim rebels. Conspiring to seize power, RAM prepared to launch a coup but this was discovered by General Ver's men. About to be arrested, Enrile and his RAM followers, joined by General Fidel Ramos, then chief of the Philippine Constabulary, seized one of the government military camps where they openly declared their mutiny. This ignited the historic events of 22–25 February 1986 when the confluence of a military mutiny supported by a massive people's mobilization forced Marcos out of power.

One legacy of authoritarian rule and the transition process lies in the politicization of the military, rooted in two sets of experiences: a taste of direct political power when they were assigned as martial law administrators and heads of various government corporations and private firms taken over by Marcos; and the attempt at myth-making as the "nation's saviour-guardian" perpetrated by RAM and like-minded officers based on their role in the February mutiny. As shown by the various coup attempts launched by RAM and other military factions during the Corazon Aquino administration (1986–92), and the ouster of President Estrada in 2001, this continuing mindset poses a problem to democratic consolidation. Ironically, the post-Marcos constitution approved in 1987

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provides some kind of a legal leg to this claim as it recognizes the principle that the military is the protector of the people and the state.

The most important features of the transition process that have also conditioned the democratic consolidation efforts in the country include the following. First, a politicized military has shown that the democratic principle of the military's subordination to civilian control has become a contested one. This tendency to intervene in political matters has become more pronounced in conjunctures of contentious politics, such as during the impeachment process of former President Estrada where the functioning of already weak political institutions was further strained by militant and confrontational claims against the government and its leading officials. Secondly, the transition process has neither fully incorporated nor succeeded in negotiating political settlements with the armed movements, both the communist and Muslim-based ones. This means that the protracted armed struggles, while highlighting valid social and economic claims, do sap badly needed resources and also provide dangerous opportunities for the interventionist agenda of ambitious military officers and their civilian allies. Thirdly, authoritarian rule left behind an economy in dire straits with government resources plundered by the Marcos clan and its business cronies, and a society deeply divided by acute class and income inequalities. Fourthly, there is a robust tradition of a vibrant civil society, including social movements, people's organizations, and development-oriented non-government organizations (NGOs), but there are also groups and organizations with authoritarian and anti-democratic tendencies enjoying significant autonomy from the state. Fifthly, the state continues to operate with relatively weak capacities and with political institutions enfeebled by pervasive corruption and lack of professionalism and oftentimes overwhelmed by militant claim-making by civil society groups. Finally, in the transition process and in the consolidation phase, a key external actor, the United States, has played an important role, and its policies will continue to be a defining frame of reference for state policies and initiatives. For instance, the United States, especially under President Ronald Reagan, was a major supporter of Marcos, but in the waning days of the regime it facilitated the dictator's exile to Hawaii to pave the way for the assumption to power of the moderate forces under Corazon Aquino and to pre-empt any radical challenge by the revolutionary forces.

Problems of Democratic Consolidation

The process of democratic consolidation may be seen to be taking place at two levels. At one level, there is the embedding of formal democratic political institutions and procedures that guarantee the rule of law, the

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exercise of basic civil and political rights, and fair, competitive elections. At another level, there is the cultivation of a democratic way of life and civic capabilities as nurtured largely by civil society.[7] In more concrete terms, Linz and Stepan specify at least three crucial elements of consolidation:

> Behaviorally, when no significant political groups seek to overthrow the democratic regime or secede from the state. Attitudinally, when democratic procedures and institutions are viewed generally by the populace as the most appropriate means of governing collective life, and there is little support for alternatives. Constitutionally, when political forces become subjected to and habituated to the resolution of conflict within the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process.[8]

In the Philippine context, these intertwined processes of building democratic rules and institutions and strengthening democratic values need to be situated within the following defining features. There is a tradition of a state with weak capacities particularly for economic developmental ends.[9] This weak state and its institutions, compromised by pervasive corruption and lack of insulation from powerful vested interest groups have been a major factor for a slow growth economy. In turn, the poorly performing economy has accentuated deep-seated class cleavages and regional-religious divisions, particularly in the southern part of the country. While the country is hobbled by a weak state tradition, there is a robust civil society that has militantly advanced the social and economic interests of the various disadvantaged sectors. However, with its overall weakness and paucity of resources, the state and its institutions find it difficult to address these issues, leading to regular cycles of contentious politics, particularly by social movements that make the regulation of conflict difficult.[10] Thus, contentious politics in a fragile democracy can have contradictory results. By its ability to mobilize and empower disadvantaged sectors, it can enhance democratic governance by enforcing more transparent and accountable ruling procedures. On the other hand, by overwhelming political institutions with oftentimes difficult demands and bypassing institutional frameworks of claim-making and governance, contentious political actions can put under severe stress the minimum conditions of consensus and accommodation necessary for democratic contestation.

The Armed Movements and Negotiated Political Settlements

Consistent with Rustow's counsel that a significant level of national unity is a critical condition for a working democratic order, one of the

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first orders of democratic consolidation in the country lies in the political resolution of the continuing armed conflict with the local communist movement and the various Islamic movements. A militarist approach to the armed conflict is neither desirable nor sustainable.[11] In the long run, a sustained process of economic growth and development and a more inclusive politics of accommodation are the best approaches to strengthen the commitment for democratic forms of conflict resolution. In the short run, however, a politically negotiated settlement to the armed conflict is the most practicable approach since political negotiations can be jump-started by favourable political opportunities and the creative initiatives of key players.

Rooted in centuries of peasant struggles, the resilience of the local communist movement in the face of the breakdown of various communist systems and parties abroad, and the general retreat of the communist ideology, clearly suggest that it has a local political constituency whose needs have to be seriously addressed.[12] Drawing from the lessons of past negotiations with both the local communist and Muslim movements, one important factor in seeking a political settlement with the CPP and its allied organizations is the role of an international mediator. As shown by the peace process with the MNLF, the role of a mutually acceptable third party international mediator with political and moral clout to influence the turn of events must be given full play in the negotiations with the communist movement.[13] In the latest phase of the negotiations, Norway has offered and been accepted by both parties as the official host for the talks. With its long experience in hosting and facilitating peace talks, Norway has the prestige and resources to potentially contribute to a favourable outcome.

Two important political developments have emerged to affect the possibilities of a negotiated political settlement with the CPP. The first concerns the declaration by the United States, with the ready acquiescence of the Arroyo government, that the CPP and its guerrilla army, the New People's Army (NPA), are international terrorist organizations, followed up by a call for the freezing of all their foreign-based assets.[14] Coming at a time of escalating armed encounters by both sides but also in a period of renewed vigourous calls for peace negotiations by civil society, the American diktat has strengthened the militarist voices in the administration. However, unless fully backed up by massive American military and financial support, the government is in no position to wage a military offensive in a widened battlefield against both communist and Muslim guerrillas. On a more auspicious note, the 2001 national elections marked a significant decision by the social movements and legal organizations identified with the communist movement to contest the party-list elections.[15] In the context of the

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peace process, this successful participation in the electoral contest by the largest organized left forces in the country creates a potential constituency of activists and supporters who may be more sensitive to the viability of electoral struggles and more supportive of the urgency of a politically negotiated settlement with the government. Thus, the political conjuncture has opened up two possibilities: a U.S.-supported military offensive against the armed movements, with enormous social and economic costs, or a resumption of the peace process aiming at a political negotiation with the help of an international third party mediator and popular support from civil society.

Steeped in a long history of struggles against the central government dating back to colonial times, the Muslim armed movements are proving to be quite intractable because they articulate ethnic and religious interests that overlap with material inequalities, further fuelled by state repression. For instance, the provinces dominated by Muslims (Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and Basilan) also happen to be the country's worst areas in terms of income, life expectancy, and functional literacy. The Muslim-based armed movements have fractured into three distinct but related organizations (the Moro National Liberation Front, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and the Abu Sayyaf), and thus require a more nuanced political approach appropriate to the particularities of each group.[16] Of the three, the Abu Sayyaf is by far the smallest group but has provoked the fiercest armed encounters because it has thrived on a project of ruthless and spectacular kidnappings. The government decision to accept American military forces in the battle against the Abu Sayyaf has provoked a militant nationalist backlash and once more underscores the difficulty of working out a consensus on fundamental national issues.[17] The MNLF, led by Nur Misuari, entered into a peace agreement with the government in September 1996, and Misuari himself was subsequently elected governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). However, the MNLF has split into two rival camps and Misuari is now in jail, facing rebellion charges as a result of an abortive uprising he instigated against government forces in late 2001. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), an earlier breakaway faction from the MNLF and led by Hashim Salamat, is working out peace negotiations with the government after a massive government military offensive under former President Estrada dismantled its major camps in Mindanao.

In the political settlement between the government and the MNLF, the key political institution that needs to be strengthened is the ARMM. Short of a major revision of the constitution, which could explore the possibility of a federal system, the ARMM is the most practicable regional parliamentary institution for processing many of the legitimate

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demands of the MNLF. Unfortunately, the poor performance of Misuari as governor of the ARMM and severe resource constraints have undermined the credibility of this institution and much needs to be done to make it a more effective instrument for addressing urgent socio-economic problems in the region. Through the ARMM, the possibility of producing a new generation of elected Muslim leaders more directly accountable to their constituencies and with more sophisticated governing skills is also enhanced. In the case of the MILF, the need to firm up a peace settlement after a ceasefire agreement in August 2001 has been made extremely urgent by new reports about the financial and military links of the movement with Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network and its Southeast Asian affiliate, Jemaah Islamiah.[18] Finally, the government has launched an all-out military offensive against the Abu Sayyaf but this has proven to be costly and difficult. While small and splintered, the Abu Sayyaf enjoys the natural advantages of guerrilla warfare in the area and continuing linkages with various MNLF and MILF units plus the support of traditional kinship networks made easier through its substantial financial resources gained from lucrative kidnapping-for-ransom operations.

The pervasive poverty of a significant segment of the population constitutes another major challenge to democratic consolidation.[19] In their study of 141 countries between 1950 and 1990, Przeworski and his co-researchers stress that the best predictor of democratic survival is the affluence or poverty of a country: "... per capita income is by far the best predictor of the survival of democracies. Democracies survive in affluent societies whatever may be happening to them. They are brittle in poor countries."[20] Consistent with this observation, it is not surprising that the communist guerrillas and Muslim rebels have proven to be most rooted and resilient also in the poorest provinces and regions of the country. In the same manner, the huge numbers of the urban poor in Manila that attacked the presidential palace less than three months after President Arroyo assumed office further dramatizes this problem. However, it is not so much the ferocity and violence of the mobilization that should provoke strategic concern for those committed to state capacity-building and democratization as the urgency of addressing the causes of poverty and slow, highly skewed economic growth. In the same research, Przeworski and his colleagues also argue a critical point that various forms of socio-political unrest (such as strikes, anti-government demonstrations and riots) are not as economically costly in democracies as normally assumed. Moreover, past instabilities, unless in an extreme form, "[have] almost no effect on current economic performance".[21] For instance, the Ramos administration was able to recover from the negative growth rates

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provoked by the series of coup attempts during the Aquino period (1986–92) and was even able to post growth rates averaging 5 per cent a year between 1994 and 1997. In addressing problems of democratic consolidation in relatively poorer states, therefore, it is vital that the government worry not so much about militant forms of political mobilization and claim-making as about how to decisively address poverty and economic growth. Very often, contentious forms of politics articulate deep-seated and legitimate economic and social issues, and democratic systems are expected to be more tolerant if not actually protective of such forms of claim-making.

A major issue in the working out of a democratic order in the Philippines concerns the complex relations of conflict and compromise, negotiations and accommodations between state authorities and the vibrant but fragmented civil society. For historical and political reasons briefly described earlier, there exists a dense network of civil society organizations in the country. The most politically significant actors include the highly influential Catholic church, headed by Cardinal Sin, a very political persona in his own right, and various organizations allied with the church; the powerful business groups led by the Makati Business Club, which includes the country's top corporations and other business groupings, such as the Bankers Association of the Philippines (BAP) and the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP); the Iglesia ni Kristo (Church of Christ), a tightly organized and disciplined local church group with a track record of voting as a single bloc for their candidates of choice; the mass media, arguably the freest in the region; the various militant social movements oftentimes incorporating and interfacing with groupings of trade unions, people's organizations, professional organizations, and developmental NGOs operating all over the country and representing a whole range of political and ideological persuasions from left to right; and charismatic religious movements such as El Shaddai and Jesus Is Lord Movement, with significant mass followings and relatively autonomous of their mother churches.

More than the weakly institutionalized mainstream political parties, which come alive only during election campaigns, it is these civil society organizations which have played a more effective role in articulating societal interests, monitoring government performance, and organizing and mobilizing their constituencies for political actions.[22] These organizations have found ways to operate even at the height of martial rule and have been at the forefront of mass mobilizations in the ouster of Marcos and later of Estrada. The continuing challenge for the state is to find creative ways of harnessing their collective dynamism

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while respecting their institutional integrities and not falling captive to particularistic programmes espoused by some. Even while there exists many points of contention between the state and these civil society organizations, there are meeting points where co-operation and accommodation have been cultivated.[23]

In the democratic consolidation process in the Philippines, social movements have played an important role. By social movements, we refer to "a sustained challenge to powerholders in the name of a population living under the jurisdiction of those powerholders by means of repeated public displays of that population's numbers, commitment, unity, and worthiness".[24] Due to the weakness of traditional political parties in the Philippines and the wider public space enjoyed by civil society organizations, social movements continue to perform empowering, representational, distributive, ideological, and participatory functions associated with democratization. Even while they have practised a generally contentious form of politics using non-institutionalized and innovative forms of protest, the most militant and ideologically oriented social movements in the post-Marcos Philippines have in fact directly engaged the parliamentary process. This engagement has also taken the form of comprehensive claim-making against the government from within government institutions by the actual running of candidates for elective positions at the local and national levels.

The participation of the country's three most militant social movements, Bayan Muna, Akbayan and Sanlakas, in the party-list system provides an interesting case of how social movements can be incorporated in existing democratic procedures of contestation while at the same time transforming some basic rules of the game and thus contributing further to the democratization process.[25] In the 1998 party-list election, Akbayan and Sanlakas won one seat each in the Lower House. In the 2001 elections, Bayan Muna, in its maiden party-list campaign, won the maximum of three seats allotted to each party while Akbayan retained its single seat. Contesting positions in local government in 2001, Akbayan also elected 18 mayors and 200 councillors. One important outcome of the party-list election in 2001 was a legal case filed by Bayan Muna in the Supreme Court, which resulted in a clearer set of guidelines reserving the party-list system exclusively for the marginalized and under-represented sectors. Moreover, Bayan Muna has also filed a bill in the Lower House that seeks to ban those political parties which already have at least 20 per cent of the membership of the Lower House from participating in the party list. The current ban applies only to the five major political parties. While the current party list system makes it difficult to elect a

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critical mass of progressive legislators who can substantially influence the formal law-making process, these reforms by themselves advance the democratic intent and implementation of the party-list law.

While the militant social movements have increasingly made their political presence felt in the formal legislative body through the party-list system, their most important contribution to the democratization process continues to lie in the diverse ways they have organized, empowered, asserted, and expanded the rights of the poor and disadvantaged sectors of society through innovative ways of claim-making. In its myriad forms, there is virtually no process of claim-making against the state and powerholders in Philippine society which has not been initiated by or participated in the various social movements. The issues articulated range from the redistribution of wealth, the espousal of alternative worldviews and value frameworks, the expansion of citizen's rights, and all aspects of governance. What stands out then in the context of democratic consolidation is a society endlessly animated by contentious claim-making on many legitimate issues but with a state bereft of the capacity to address such claims and unable to keep pace with the changing demands of its civil society. With this dominant feature of state–civil society relations, one concrete concern for improving state capacities lies in forging stronger institutionalized political parties that can effectively articulate and aggregate popular and sectoral interests but also bind their constituencies to more practicable ways of addressing conflicting claims.

Institutional Reforms, the Filipino Diaspora and Democratization

There are at least two major institutional reforms which are worth noting in terms of their impact on the strengthening of democratic practices: first, the Local Government Code (LGC) passed in 1991; and second, the party-list system which has become a part of the electoral process since the 1998 elections. The LGC provides a greater allocation of internal revenue collections to local governments, more taxation powers, and financial autonomy. Most significantly, the LGC institutionalizes the participation of civil society organizations in the policy-making process at different levels of local governance. These reforms have served to attract more progressive and competent leaders who challenge the traditional control of local politics by established political clans.[26] Indeed, there have been outstanding cases of new progressive and reform-minded mayors and other local government officials elected under these reforms, but established political clans have also shown an amazing degree of resilience.[27]

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Two important observations need to be stressed in assessing the impact of decentralization, particularly in the context of democratization. Decentralization of powers, especially with significant civil society participation, could make the task of strengthening state capacities a more manageable task if done at the local level. This process can help decongest and redirect the avalanche of claim-making directed at the central state agencies to local agencies where transparency and accountability processes could also be monitored more closely. On the other hand, decentralization should not detract from the equally important task of strengthening state central institutions essential to addressing fundamental public needs, including those of public order and security (a professional and constitutionalist military and police), basic education and health, and central taxation agencies.

In the context of democratic consolidation, the party-list system is an electoral institution that allows parties representing the poor and marginalized sectors of society easier access to the legislature. It allocates 20 per cent of the total membership of the Lower House (or 52 seats in the current Lower House) to winning party-list candidates. A party-list organization can win from one to a maximum of three seats, depending on the percentage of votes it gets out of the total votes cast for the party-list candidates (at least 2 per cent for one seat and 6 per cent or more for three seats.) While suffering from several flaws in its conceptualization and practice, the party-list system, nonetheless, is a step in the right direction as it helps cultivate a wider and broader constituency of support for democratic institutional rules and practices. Since the 1998 party-list elections, various social movements and non-traditional parties of marginalized sectors have actively contested the positions and shown that their incorporation into formal democratic rules of contestation can result in the further expansion of democratic rules and spaces. So pronounced has been their political impact, in fact, that their success, particularly in the case of Bayan Muna, has ignited brutal attacks against its organizers and members.[28] However, to be a more effective vehicle for the claim-making of disadvantaged sectors and their parties, there is a need to increase the proportion of seats allocated to the party-list to allow for a balance between legislators representing specific territories through the single-member constituencies and those representing functional and sectoral interests through the party-list.

Finally, the long-term political consequences of the Filipino diaspora on the further consolidation of democracy in the country needs to be examined. The overseas contract worker returnees, many of whom are college-educated, constitute a new and powerful constituency of more competent, confident, multi-skilled individuals who can be

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expected to demand more exacting standards from public officials. Some have indeed run for public office or set up small businesses, adding to their sense of empowerment and independence. This potential can be multiplied a thousand times over, given their direct influence on a network of family, friends, and beneficiaries. Even while they are physically separated from political events in the country, they have been able to intervene in various ways through the facilities of modern communications technology and the representations on their behalf of local support networks. For instance, at the height of the mass mobilizations against Estrada, a number of electronic discussion and pressure groups were set up and actively participated in by many Filipino professionals abroad. Indicative not only of their economic impact but of their growing political strength, a new Absentee Voting Law that will allow them to vote while overseas is expected to be approved soon by the legislature. Perhaps, this is one aspect of globalization that may yet energize the democratic process.

NOTES

1. For an excellent discussion of the political and administrative aspects of this process between 1900 and 1913, see Paul D. Hutchcroft, "Colonial Masters, National Politics, and Provincial Lords: Central Authority and Local Autonomy in the American Philippines, 1900–1913", *Journal of Asian Studies 59*, no. 2 (May 2000): 34.
2. For a detailed discussion of this process and its outcomes, see ibid., pp. 277–306.
3. See Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model", *Comparative Politics 3* (1970): 337–63.
4. Ibid., p. 360.
5. For a convenient collection of articles discussing various aspects of the rise and fall of the Marcos dictatorship, see Aurora Javate de Dios, Petronilo Bn. Daroy, and Lorna Kalaw Tirol, eds., *Dictatorship and Revolution: Roots of People's Power* (Metro Manila: Conspectus Foundation, Inc., 1988).
6. A detailed narration and analysis of the politics of the transition process is provided by David Wurfel, "Transition to Political Democracy in the Philippines", in *Democratic Transition and Consolidation in Southern Europe, Latin America and Southeast Asia*, edited by Diane Ethier (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1990), pp. 110–35.
7. See Stephen Macedo, "Transitions to What? The Social Foundations of Democratic Citizenship", in *Pathways to Democracy: The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions*, edited by James F. Hollifield and Calvin Jillson (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 53–54.
8. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 5–6.
9. To qualify as a democratic developmental state, Adrian Leftwich argues that the primary developmental criterion is an annual average rate of growth in GNP per

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capita of at least 4 per cent over a period of twenty-five or thirty years (2000, p. 173). Under this criterion, the Philippines fails to qualify. Leftwich further notes the tension between democracy and development in that consolidated and stabilized democracies oftentimes lose the ability to make decisive policies to transform the fundamental structures of economic and social life necessary for development to take place. See Adrian Leftwich, *States of Development: On the Primacy of Politics in Development* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

10. By "contentious politics", I adopt the framework used by McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly when they refer to episodic, public forms of collective struggle usually targetting the government as an object of claim, and especially when innovative forms of collective action (unprecedented or forbidden within the regime) are used. See Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 4–9.
11. For the human and socio-economic costs of the war waged by President Estrada against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 2000, see Fermin D. Adriano, "Mindanao: The Making of the Crisis", in *Between Fires: Fifteen Perspectives on the Estrada Crisis*, edited by Amando Doronila (Pasig City and Makati City: Anvil Publishing, Inc. and Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2001), pp. 200–11. Between January 2000 and July 2002, the government admitted losing 750 troops, with another 3,000 wounded in resurgent battles with Muslim rebels and communist guerrillas (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 17 October 2002, online edition).
12. The new Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), which leads the armed struggle, was established in 1968, but the movement has suffered organizational splits provoked by ideological and political differences generated in part by different responses to the restoration of formal democratic rule in 1986. The main and largest guerrilla units continue to be under the leadership of the CPP.
13. In the peace agreement concluded in 1996 between the Ramos administration and the MNLF led by Nur Misuari, the facilitative and persuasive role of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and one of its leading members, Indonesia, was an important factor in the process.
14. The immediate effect of this order was the freezing of the bank account (with about 1,000 Euros) in the Netherlands of Jose Ma. Sison, exiled founding leader of the re-established Communist Party. The Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Blas Ople, also started a campaign to convince the European states to declare the NDF-CPP and the NPA as terrorist organizations. Subsequently, the European Union included Sison and the New People's Army in its list of international terrorists.
15. In the 2001 elections, the left legal organizations referred to as "national-democratic" and identified with the main communist formation (CPP) set up Bayan Muna, a political party to contest the party-list election. Bayan Muna topped the party-list slate, winning the maximum of three representatives allowed for an organization in the party-list process.
16. The Abu Sayyaf (Bearer or Father of the Sword, in Arabic) traces its roots to the CIA-financed *mujahideens* who fought the Soviets in the Afghan war. The Abu Sayyaf presence in the Philippines was orchestrated by Abdurajak Janjalani, an Afghan war veteran, and his brother Khaddafi. Abdurajak espoused a radical Islamist vision for the Filipino Muslims but this political agenda got sidetracked after his death in 1998 and the Abu Sayyaf has since broken up into autonomous small armed units mainly in the Muslim dominated provinces and islands. For the roots of the Abu Sayyaf, see John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (London: Pluto Press, 1999); and also Marites Danguilan Vitug and Glenda Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao* (Quezon

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City: Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, and Institute for Popular Democracy, 2000).

17. Vice-President Teofisto Guingona was critical of American military intervention in the battle against the Muslim rebels and was later pressured to resign from his concurrent position as Secretary of Foreign Affairs.
18. For reports about these linkages, see Maria A. Ressa, "Infiltrating the MILF", *Newsbreak*, 28 October 2002 (online edition).
19. In 1997, when the Asian economic crisis erupted, poverty incidence in the country was at 32 per cent, and between 1985 and 1997, official poverty estimates show that poverty declined by an average of one percentage point a year. This rate of poverty reduction is slower compared with the rates in East Asia and the Pacific as a whole (1.6 percentage point a year). See Arsenio M. Balisacan, "Did the Estrada Administration Benefit the Poor?" in *Fifteen Perspectives on the Estrada Crises*, edited by Amando Doronila (Pasig and Makati City: Anvil Publishing House and Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2001), pp. 98–112.
20. Adam Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 137.
21. Ibid., p. 211.
22. For a source book rich in case studies detailing various aspects of civil society–state relations in policy-making, policy advocacy, and political mobilizations for different causes, see Marlon A. Wui and Ma. Glenda S. Lopez, eds., *State–Civil Society Relations in Policy-Making* (Quezon City: Third World Studies Center, 1997); and Miriam Coronel Ferrer, ed., *Civil Society Making Civil Society* (Quezon City: Third World Studies Center, 1997).
23. During each of the post-Marcos administrations, the broad NGO community and people's organizations have shaped important policy debates, influenced policy outcomes, and contributed members to the presidential Cabinet staff. For instance, in the Aquino administration, the organizations and alliances of the urban poor succeeded in pushing for the creation of the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor and the passage of the 1992 Urban Development and Housing Act. See Anna Marie A. Karaos, "Urban Governance and Poverty Alleviation in the Philippines," in *Urban Governance and Poverty Alleviation in Southeast Asia*, edited by Emma Porio (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 1997), p. 69. During the Ramos and Estrada administrations, the Cabinet positions for the Secretary of Agrarian Reform were filled up by NGO personalities, and during the Arroyo administration, the Secretary for Social Work and Development was assumed by a woman NGO leader.
24. Charles Tilly, "Social Movements as Historically Specific Clusters of Political Performances", *Berkeley Journal of Sociology 38* (1994): 7.
25. Representing various left tendencies, Bayan Muna, Akbayan, and Sanlakas act simultaneously as social movements and party-list organizations. Their core constituencies include labour, peasant, urban poor, women's organizations, and progressive professionals and middle-class elements. Akbayan has the most diverse grouping of left organizations, Sanlakas' core political support is the trade union movement, while Bayan Muna was launched by the "national-democratic" left forces, the biggest organized left movement in the country.
26. The best known case of this new breed of elected local politicians is Mayor Jesse Robredo of Naga City in Southern Luzon, who received the Magsaysay award for public service. For the dynamics of his rise to power, see Takeshi Kawanaka, *Power in a Philippine City* (Chiba: Institute of Developing Economies and Japan External Trade Organization, 2002).

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27. The established political clans continue to be dominant, particularly in the provinces with the highest human development indicators (income, health, and education). For instance, from 1946 to 1998, they continued to win and dominate congressional elections in 20 out of the 25 richest provinces. See Temario C. Rivera, "Political Clans and the Philippine State: A Rethinking" (Paper presented at Sophia University, Tokyo, 12 May 2001).
28. In a span of one year, between April 2001 and April 2002, Bayan Muna reported the killing of 17 co-ordinators and members, 6 abductions, and 64 cases of various kinds of human rights violations against its members in various parts of the country.

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Anti-Party Reaction in Indonesia: Causes and Implications

PAIGE JOHNSON TAN

In contemporary Indonesian politics, an anti-party reaction can be observed in attempts to curtail the nation's political parties. This can be seen in the creation of the Dewan Perwakilan Daerah, or Senate, a party-less institution, and efforts by non-governmental organizations to create an independent constitutional commission. Revised election laws now being considered will also attempt to limit the power of the parties, particularly the party centres. This article explains the anti-party backlash as a result of the legacy of anti-party attitudes, the parties' behaviour across the transition, the strong position of the parties as set out in the 1999 election laws, and the current state of public opinion towards the parties. The anti-party reaction contains within it the prospect of delegitimating the parties as a cornerstone of Indonesia's contemporary democracy.

Introduction

Facing impeachment in 2001, Abdurrahman Wahid bemoaned that, all other avenues exhausted in an attempt to save his presidency, he was "lodging a protest with God" against the injustice with which he had been treated.[1] For Abdurrahman Wahid, it was not his performance in office or his sidelining of other political tendencies in Indonesia, but rather the vicious and unbounded ambition of his opponents which was motivating the attempt to remove him from office. Even though impeachment could be seen as having been effective in removing a leader who was widely perceived to be ineffective, the months of chaos

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and the willingness of political party leaders to take the country to the brink of violent inter-communal conflict over the issue seemed to turn many Indonesians off, potentially undermining the legitimacy of Indonesia's post-Soeharto political system.

This article contends that in the short period of time since Soeharto's fall in May 1998, admittedly under trying political and economic circumstances both domestically and internationally, Indonesia's political parties have spent much of the goodwill bestowed on them by the population as the proper organizing principle for a post-Soeharto political system; this has led to a significant anti-party reaction. The parties are strongly embedded in the contemporary political system, but this very strength has enabled them to operate in ways that are alienating the population. With parties and elections being the most overt feature of Indonesia's evolving democratic system, delegitimation of the parties presents challenges for the consolidation of democracy in the country.

It is common in Indonesian political discourse for parties to be derided as power-hungry, selfish, and corrupt. Commentators, intellectuals, and even party politicians themselves often lament that the country is experiencing a "crisis of leadership" or a "moral crisis". The article begins by exploring the reaction against the parties currently under way in Indonesia. It then explains the reasons for the anti-party backlash by examining the legacy of anti-party attitudes bequeathed by earlier periods in Indonesian political life, the parties' behaviour since the 1999 elections, the strength of the parties in the contemporary politico-legal framework, and popular attitudes towards the parties as revealed in a succession of opinion polls conducted over the course of the transition. Finally, the article concludes by considering the implications of the anti-party reaction for the consolidation of democracy.

The Anti-Party Reaction

Since Soeharto's fall in 1998, many opinion leaders and even members of the general public have been uncomfortable with the sheer number of parties that have arisen in Indonesia. More than two hundred parties were formed in the period 1998–99. Forty-eight parties qualified to compete in the 1999 elections. Twenty-one of those parties achieved representation in Parliament. Frustration has also been expressed with the charismatic basis of the parties. Rather than representing programmes or coalitions of interests, the parties were derided as relying solely on the personal charisma of a leading individual, such as Megawati Soekarnoputri, for the election's top finisher, the Partai Demokrasi

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Indonesia–Perjuangan (PDI-P). Furthermore, the basing of many of the parties in the country's socio-religious groupings seemed to heighten the potential for inter-party rivalry to breach the bounds of rule-based, institutionalized competition. The way in which the impeachment battle in 2001 seemed to turn into a proxy war between the country's modernist and traditionalist Muslims seemed to confirm the worst fears of inter-party, inter-communal violence.

Four years into the transition, the reaction against the new parties is in full swing; this can be seen in a selection of important episodes beginning in about 2001. The replacement of the party-dominated Elections Commission, demands that high state officials give up their party leadership posts, draft changes to the laws on elections and political parties, and constitutional issues all show a decided trend away from Indonesia's parties. The episodes are outlined below. The reasons for this anti-party backlash are explored in what follows.

First, in 2001, the party-dominated General Elections Commission (Komisi Pemiliham Umum, or KPU) was replaced by a new body, composed entirely of civil society figures and academics. The KPU was formed in early 1999 and was composed of fifty-three representatives, one from each of the forty-eight election-contesting parties, and five government representatives. This post-Soeharto KPU was a specific reaction against government manipulation of elections during the Soeharto years. The presence of party representatives on the Commission was intended to ensure that the former government-backed party, Golkar, would be unable to use election administration, as it had in the past, in order to secure victory. However, as will be explored below, when the parties' behaviour during the transition is examined, it appears that the party-dominated KPU presented its own array of troubles. Almost from the time of the elections in 1999, demands were heard for the Commission to be revamped and its members replaced with non-partisan appointees. Finally, in 2001, the official changeover to the new KPU was achieved.

Secondly, in late 2001 and early 2002, top party leaders, particularly Megawati Soekarnoputri (President of Indonesia and head of the PDI-P) and Hamzah Haz (Vice-President and head of the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, or PPP), were repeatedly told by academics and activists to resign from their party posts to concentrate on the "national interest" embodied in their high state posts.[2] The general reasoning behind these demands was that, as top *state* officials in their elected positions, these party leaders could no longer represent just the interests of their particular *party*. Azyumardi Azra, a moderate Muslim scholar at the Syarif Hidayatullah State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN), said that, "If they [the top leaders] are really concerned about the problems faced by the country, they should be ready to leave their position in their

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political parties so that they can focus on their duties as public officials".[3] This echoed a view published in an earlier article entitled "National Leaders Putting Parties Ahead of Country, Analysts Say", in which political analyst Syamsuddin Haris was reported as saying that the people had demanded that those in top state positions who were simultaneously party heads should step down from their party posts, but the call had been refused. According to Syamsuddin, "this shows they are still focusing on their short-term political interests even though they have been entrusted to lead the nation".[4]

While Amien Rais issued a statement that he was considering the idea of resigning from the Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) to concentrate on his post as head of the Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (MPR), none of the top leaders has at this writing given up a top party post. In fact, Amien Rais's proposal may have had more to do with his own manoeuvring away from the weak PAN to place himself in a stronger position for the presidential elections in 2004. In recognition of the central role played by the party leader, normally quiet Megawati Soekarnoputri made a public defence of her need to maintain her party leadership post. The movement to force top state officials to resign their party leadership positions lost momentum in early 2002, but its existence and its duration reflected deep unease with the idea of "partisanship" on the part of high state officers.

Thirdly, non-governmental organizations have pressured the MPR, the highest legislative body, to give up its power in constitutional revision to an independent, non-partisan constitutional commission. This effort, ongoing since about 2000, experienced its first success in 2002 when the MPR took note of demands for an independent constitutional commission in an MPR resolution. The attempt to take control over amending the constitution from the party-dominated MPR and to place it in the hands of an independent constitutional commission represents a serious attempt to curtail the power of the political parties, taking away one of the core functions of the legislative body. While the MPR took note of the idea of an independent constitutional commission, its support for the effort was, not surprisingly, half-hearted. In the words of the decree establishing a commission under the control of the MPR's working body (*Badan Pekerja*), the commission "shall be established with the task of undertaking a comprehensive investigation into amendment of the 1945 Constitution".[5] The commission will have the power to investigate amendment but, as yet, no authority to undertake amendment of the constitution. The parties, thus far, have successfully manoeuvred to retain control.

Fourthly, the country's laws on parties and elections are currently under revision. New laws are expected in late 2002 or early 2003. Dissatisfaction with the operation of Indonesia's institutions has from

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the very beginning pushed for the laws' revision. The new laws, as they exist in government-proposed drafts and non-governmental organization input, have taken a decided move away from strong parties and, particularly, against strong party centres.

Under most future scenarios, the number of parties competing in elections will decrease. While forty-eight parties competed in 1999, the 1999 laws did envision a winnowing of the field. A requirement that parties receive at least 2 per cent of legislative seats in 1999 in order to contest follow-on elections appears as if it will be retained in the new laws and enforced; this is a result of a widespread belief that Indonesia has "too many parties". With this stipulation, the field of forty-eight parties in 1999 will be reduced to just six parties.[6] The government draft election law also sets tight requirements on the formation of new political parties. Parties must have leadership boards in two-thirds of Indonesia's provinces and two-thirds of the regencies within those provinces. Each of these regency-level party units must demonstrate that it has at least one thousand members (with copies of members' identity cards) in order to be allowed to compete in 2004. Some parties from 1999, such as Partai Keadilan (PK), should have no trouble meeting this requirement. However, looking at the requirements broadly and considering Indonesia's population size and spread, this is a daunting figure for many new parties. To circumvent the stipulation, the parties may, instead of collecting dues from members, be paying them to sign up in future.

The other major feature of the revised election laws will be the election system in use. Indonesia's party-list proportional representation (PR) system has been strongly denigrated as contributing to the lack of connection between elected representatives and the citizens. It is commonly heard that the system is not democratic because voters choose parties and not representatives in the elections. While a number of alternative systems have been mooted, the need for a simple, comprehensible system may render many of the proposals naïve dreams. The likeliest choices now appear to be between the party-list PR currently in operation and a PR system which tightens the relationship of candidate to constituency and voter, one which may even see candidate names used on the ballot. The government draft proposes the latter, but it is the parties in Parliament which will be debating and finalizing the bill. Attempts to control the parties through changes in the election law demonstrate dissatisfaction with their current performance. The parties' reticence to give up their prerogatives show their will to retain power.

The changes of election and party laws are in addition to important constitutional changes put in place in August 2002, which have transformed the institutional framework in ways affecting the parties'

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positions.[7] The creation of a directly-elected presidency has in a sense strengthened the parties as it is only election-contesting parties or coalitions of parties (with a candidate from among their members) which will be allowed to put forward candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency. It was in the spirit of democracy that the directly-elected presidency was first proposed, but the proposal was also a strong reaction against the deal-making (*dagang sapi*, or cow trading) and machinations of the parties in Parliament — both in the election of the President in 1999 and the impeachment of Abdurrahman Wahid in 2001.

Mitigating the parties' power, however, and reflecting strong attempts to control them, is the creation of a new *party-less* institution, the Regional Representatives Council (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah, or DPD). Parties are specifically disallowed to compete for the seats in this body, which will be composed of four members from each of Indonesia's thirty provinces. The Lower House, the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR), and the new DPD will come together to form the new Upper House, the MPR. On its own, however, it is unclear now what real power the DPD will have. Thus, it is unclear what real power the parties have ceded to the new body. The perceived need for the creation of a party-less body represents an intriguing institutional development. If a party-less body can better represent the regions' interests in Parliament, what does that say about the representation of other interests at the national level?

Why is There an Anti-Party Reaction in Indonesia?

The selection of anti-party manoeuvres outlined above shows a decided attempt to control the political parties' partisanship and to make representatives more accountable to voters. The frustration with Indonesia's political parties can be seen as typical of reactions faced in many situations of transition from authoritarian rule. How and why this is happening in Indonesia matters a great deal in understanding the country's contemporary political debate and recent political developments. The anti-party lens and the parties' attempts to maintain their power and prerogatives are central features of current politics. It is vital to analyse the source and nature of anti-party attitudes for what they have to say about the legitimacy of the parties as the central organizing principle of Indonesia's democracy.

The sources of the anti-party movements outlined above lie in the legacy of anti-party attitudes bequeathed from earlier periods of Indonesia's political life, the parties' actions over the course of the transition, the strength and unchecked nature of the parties' legal

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position in the contemporary political system, and popular attitudes towards the parties.

The Legacy of Anti-Party Attitudes

Indonesia's political system did not start from null with Soeharto's ouster; and this observation applies particularly to attitudes towards political parties. The 1950s period of parliamentary democracy (1949–59) taught certain lessons about political parties to Indonesians. These lessons were elaborated upon and strongly inculcated in the population throughout the long years of Soeharto's New Order (1966–98).

During the parliamentary democracy period, chaos in the economy as well as the instability of up-down governments seemed to delegitimate the parties and the wider democratic system. Soekarno, speaking later, said of parliamentary democracy that it was "debate without end over small points, in which each group fought to achieve victory of its interests and slighted the interest of the nation, the interest of the common people, and the interest of our revolution".[8] While debate often focused on important symbolic issues, it did prevent the government from acting in a unified way in addressing the concrete expectations of the population. It was the parties, and especially the strong polarization of competition among the parties, that took the overwhelming share of the blame for the government's failure to deliver in the 1950s.

At the same time that the parties' reputations were declining, ideologically, Soekarno and others were growing more combative towards the idea of the party system and liberal democracy itself. Western liberal democracy and its attendant political parties needlessly sundered the harmony of the political community, in Soekarno's view. Western liberal democracy, or 50 per cent + 1 (*separu tambah satu*) democracy, as Soekarno began to mock it, was not in keeping with Indonesia's indigenous democratic traditions. Culture was used (and crafted) by Soekarno to justify moving away from parties and parliamentary democracy.

Soekarno put forth an alternative conception of governance which he asserted was more in tune with indigenous village-level conceptions of democracy. In the village, everyone was given a say; this was consultation (*musyawarah*). After everyone had a say, however, it was the job of the village headman to sum up and guide the consensus (*mufakat*) of views which had been reached. Soekarno, the unifier, envisioned himself as Indonesia's headman, the one individual who could see past particular interests and view Indonesia's national interest. These views, as developed under different governmental forms during

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the Soeharto years, have continued to affect popular views of the parties today.

During Soeharto's New Order regime, anti-party attitudes were consciously embedded in the political system. The number of parties allowed to compete was limited. The ruling party of the New Order, Golkar, was not even legally a party at all but rather a coalition of notionally non-partisan functional groups. While Soekarno had emphasized the need for unity in carrying out Indonesia's revolution, Soeharto emphasized the need for unity of all social and political forces in support of economic development. Indoctrination through government-enforced ideological training classes and government control of the media reinforced the regime's contention that Indonesia was far too heterogeneous a country to allow the unfettered competition of different political parties. Liem Sioe Liong of Tapol, a Europe-based Indonesian human rights organization, cites the corporatist ideology of the Soeharto era as a prime determinant of contemporary anti-party attitudes. According to Liem, these contemporary views still reflect "corporatism, that national values are above everything".[9]

It was in this atmosphere of anti-party attitudes that Soeharto fell. Indeed, he was not brought down by the political parties, though certainly the victimization of Megawati Soekarnoputri and her branch of the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia played a part in discrediting the regime. No, instead it was primarily students who initiated the process which led Soeharto's authoritarian regime to melt down from under him.

Still, as is the case in many transitions from authoritarian rule, though it was not the parties which brought down the former ruler, it was to them that the nation looked to construct a new political society. The problem in Indonesia was that democracy, and its attendant system of inter-party competition, was attempting to root itself in an environment of strongly anti-party attitudes. The country had been told over forty years to adhere to one national interest. After Soeharto, the parties represented a cacophony of conflicting and particular interests.

The Play of Politics and Views of the Parties

The Parties Put on a Successful Election, But . . .

To the legacies of the past, we must add the play of politics across the transition as a factor in shaping the contemporary anti-party reaction. A brief recounting will show that, through a succession of less-than-flattering incidents, the parties have been instrumental in seemingly trying to delegitimate themselves with their own behaviour. In particular, the parties' shallow campaigns in 1999, their participation on the General Elections Commission (KPU), and their machinations to remove

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Abdurrahman Wahid from office have confirmed a view of the parties as self-interested and narrowly partisan. Some have questioned: can these parties truly serve as the vehicles of popular representation?

In the run-up to the 1999 elections, the behaviour of the parties provided pause to thoughtful observers. The campaign centred on personalities rather than issues, and disagreements among the parties seemed highly polarized: between old and new, reform and status quo, Islam and secularism. Parties paid for mass attendance at rallies in the widespread assumption that being seen as a big party improved one's final vote on election day. There was also violence between supporters of rival parties, but this was far less than expected and, in fact, less than had occurred during the last elections of Soeharto's New Order in 1997. Campaign rallies rolled through the country's major cities and blocked traffic, causing annoyance and a very real fear of violence among many members of the public.

In the run-up to the elections and afterwards, another way the parties were viewed was through their participation on the party-dominated General Elections Commission. The KPU is important here because the behaviour of the parties on the KPU went a long way to confirming everyone's worst views of the parties — they were seen as unscrupulous, self-serving, and corrupt.

Particularly in the wake of the elections, the KPU seemed to become a national embarrassment, especially over two issues: demands by small party representatives for seats for all parties contesting the elections, regardless of votes earned, and the KPU's inability to approve the election results. After the elections, when it became apparent that most seats would be concentrated among the top six or seven parties, several spokesmen for the small parties demanded legislative seats for all parties that had participated in the elections, regardless of votes earned. The spokesmen justified this by saying that all the parties had helped to make the elections a success and that there had been too little time for them to prepare for the elections after Soeharto's fall. Western-trained political scientist and government-appointed member of the KPU, Andi Mallarangeng, described this demand simply as having "no logic".[10] The small parties, derided as *gurem* or chicken-flea parties, were widely perceived as sore losers.

Many smaller parties also refused to sign the election results until *all* reports of election violations had been investigated (and, apparently, rectified through repeat voting if necessary). This led to a progressive rolling back of the announcement of the vote results in an extremely tense nation until 4 August, although elections had been held on 7 June. In fact, the KPU *never* approved the vote results, as they had been rejected by 27 of the 48 election-contending political parties. The

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results were eventually approved by an executive order from the President.[11] While the *gurem* were correct that election violations had been widespread, all outside observers judged that these did not materially affect the final outcome of the elections. The *gurem*'s behaviour, again, was seen to stem from the fact that the parties were sore losers. According to political observer Mohammad A.S. Hikam, the *gurem*'s "refusal to sign off on the results is an indication that the nation has much to learn about democracy, especially how to accept defeat".[12]

There were charges, too, in a nation keen to move beyond the Soeharto era's KKN (corruption, cronyism, and nepotism) that there had been corruption in the awarding of contracts for election-related supplies, such as indelible ink and hologrammed ballots, both designed to protect the integrity of the vote. Charges of malfeasance hung in the air over the KPU and encouraged perceptions that the parties were cut of the same cloth as the *ancien regime*.

All of these incidents led to demands that the Election Commission be revamped and made a more neutral body. The anti-party reaction outlined above led to the creation of a non-partisan Elections Commission, inaugurated in 2001. The party representatives on the KPU had delegitimated themselves right out of a job.

After the Elections: The Parties' Machinations

After the tumult of the KPU and the elections, the parties set about to form the country's new legislative and executive institutions and to govern. Many Indonesians hoped that, in contrast to the past under the Soeharto regime, the new legislators would truly represent the people of the constituencies they served. Towards this end, the 1999 election law attempted to modify the strict PR system formerly in use with a measure that would tie candidates to their districts. Voters chose only parties on their ballots, and these were then tallied at the provincial level to determine a party's proportional share of the seats for the province. However, in a first-past-the-post twist to the system, candidates were not located on a single party list. Instead, individual candidates were attached to individual regencies within the provinces, and only the highest-scoring candidates at the regency level were to be chosen to fill the party's PR quota.

After Indonesia's elections, however, candidates were shuffled wildly by the parties in an attempt to engineer the composition of the parties' legislative groupings. Jakob Tobing, head of the Indonesian Election Committee (PPI), under the KPU and in charge of election administration and vote counting, said that, as a rough estimate, 10 per

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cent of the seats had been juggled by the parties.[13] PDI-P and Golkar (the two parties which won the most seats in the elections), he said, had both forced pre-election letters of resignation from their candidates in order to ensure the parties' ability to control the composition of their parliamentary delegations. It is actions like the shuffling of candidates that have caused observers to bemoan that the legislators are "party representatives, not people's representatives".[14]

One of the most important tasks undertaken by the first sitting of the Indonesian Upper House of Parliament, the MPR, in October 1999 was the election of the country's new President. This was a time of great tension in Indonesia as the opposing forces supporting B.J. Habibie and Megawati Soekarnoputri seemed deeply polarized between the status quo and reform (though, of course, this dichotomy was never as simple as it appeared). In addition, there was the alternative candidacy of Abdurrahman Wahid, put forward by the Central Axis (*Poros Tengah*) of Muslim parties, to further complicate matters.

Periods of tension such as these have perennially led to the search in some quarters for a non-partisan solution to the nation's problems. A prominent name mentioned as a compromise presidential candidate in the second half of October 1999 (the presidential election was on 20 October) was that of Nurcholish Madjid, the rector of the Paramadina Mulya University and a respected Muslim moderate.[15] In a rare dissent, University of Indonesia political observer Arbi Sanit repeatedly recognized the danger of moves such as these. Quoting Arbi Sanit: "They are trying to build democracy while bypassing the parties. If the parties are considered vile, then what? The people who are behind the Nurcholish Madjid candidacy are the ones who do not understand the function of parties. The parties must be made to live again."[16]

Arbi Sanit's view was, however, a minority one among political observers and Indonesian intellectuals in general. The independent presidential candidate manoeuvre was defeated, as it was the parties in Parliament that were manoeuvring and voting for their respective presidential candidates. The nation greeted the election of Abdurrahman Wahid with relief, and the political process appeared to have worked, throwing up a compromise candidate in the atmosphere of tight competition between B.J. Habibie and Megawati Soekarnoputri.

Mere days later, however, upon the formation of Wahid's Cabinet, the same anti-party bias could again be seen. As a compromise candidate, Wahid was compelled to accommodate a large number of political interests (all the top parties together with the military were represented in his Cabinet). Repeated calls were heard, however, that the politicians should not engage in *dagang sapi* (cow trading) for political positions. This sentiment was in great tension with the need to represent the

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numerous streams in Indonesian politics but was a perfect reflection of the anti-party language of earlier periods.[17]

From the time Wahid was elected President in October 1999, the political parties did little to redeem themselves with the public, just cementing the legacy bias against the parties. The parties were lambasted in the media for spending all their time on political manoeuvres designed to bring down President Abdurrahman Wahid and very little on legislation or widely expected extensive constitutional reform. In the middle of 2001, the chairman of the legislation committee of the DPR admitted that little had been passed by the House. Out of fifty bills submitted up to that time, thirty were still being deliberated, and only a "handful" had been passed into law.[18] From January to August 2001 (at the height of the stand-off between the President and Parliament), only thirteen pieces of legislation were passed, most being mere administrative changes to the status of cities and one, an agreement with Hong Kong on the handling of fugitives.[19]

As the impeachment battle heated up, President Wahid threatened to declare a state of emergency, disband the Parliament, and call for early elections. His opponents decried this as unconstitutional. Even the military said publicly that it would not support a declaration of a state of emergency. Outside the buildings of state, demonstrations grew increasingly numerous. Against Wahid, demonstrators denigrated the President's incompetence and corruption. For Wahid, *pasukan berani mati* (ready-to-die squads) vowed to defend the President against the unconstitutional power-grab.

After the tussle between President Wahid and the legislature was concluded in July 2001, many Indonesians greeted the peaceful resolution (after months of seemingly escalating chaos) with relief. An Indonesian man-on-the-street was quoted as saying, the "politicians in Jakarta have been fighting for so long. We just wanted it to be over".[20] However, the situation was not like starting over because the parties' reputations had taken a battering. A common observation was that the parties were simply interested in the machinations of power, rather than in solving the real problems of the people.

Little has improved for the parties since 2001. Party splits took centre stage in 2001 and early 2002 with splits in President Wahid's National Awakening Party (PKB), Hamzah Haz's PPP (with the creation of the PPP-Reformasi), and the Partai Bulan Bintang (with the creation of the Partai Islam Indonesia). In 2001, a significant segment of liberals walked out of Amien Rais' PAN over the party's tilt towards Islam and Rais' motoring of the Wahid impeachment effort. Megawati Soekarnoputri's PDI-P has not been immune either. The PDI-P has seen the exit of several highly visible members of Parliament, such as Sophan

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Sophiaan, and the creation of splinter parties by Eros Djarot and Dimyati Hartono. In the midst of this splintering, the *Jakarta Post* ran the headline "Parties in Disarray".[21]

It is worthwhile to examine the parties' behaviour during the transition in some detail. These are the episodes Indonesians themselves have witnessed and upon which ideas about and attitudes towards the parties have been formed. One reason that the parties have been able to act with relative impunity has been their strong political–legal position in the post-Soeharto period. This is explored in the following section.

The Parties' Embeddedness

Laws on elections and political parties crafted in 1999, together with the work rules of the legislature, ensconced the parties, and particularly the party central leaderships, in positions of strong control in the political system. This embeddedness, when considered with the legacy of anti-party attitudes and the parties' behaviour, mentioned above, suggests reasons why support for the parties has dissipated since 1998–99 and an anti-party reaction has set in. Comparisons with the legal position of parties in Russia and elsewhere help to make the strength of the position of Indonesia's parties more clear.

The laws on parties and elections, Laws 2, 3, and 4 of 1999, governing parties, elections, and the structure and composition of legislative institutions, put the parties in a strong position in Indonesia's evolving political system. First, Law 3 on General Elections explicitly states that the contestants in the elections are political parties (Law 3, Chapter 9, Article 46). This can be distinguished from the practice in famously non-party Russia where political parties, civic movements, and individuals are permitted to compete for office. Furthermore, in contrast to Indonesia in 1999 when all the seats up for election were taken by the political parties because of the party-list PR system in use,[22] in the parliamentary elections of 1993, 1995, and 1999, Russia's single-member district system allowed 17 per cent to 31 per cent of deputies to come from non-party-affiliated individuals.[23]

Secondly, in its preamble, Law 2 gives the parties great importance in Indonesia's evolving political system. The parties are recognized as "instruments which have a very important meaning, function, and role as the realization of the freedom to unite, assemble, and express thought in developing the democratic life" (Law 2, Preamble). Parties' functions are delineated as political education; absorbing, channelling and struggling for the interests of their members; and preparing citizens to serve in the nation's democratic government (Law 2, Chapter 4, Article

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7). These statements give the parties a strong legal basis and recognize their important role in Indonesia's democratic political system. This is in contrast to Russia's 1999 Election Law for the Duma (Parliament), in which parties are barely mentioned.[24]

Thirdly, the elements of a proportional representation system that were chosen strengthened the party central leaderships by giving the parties maximum control over candidate selection and ranking, although the centre was supposed to use this power "democratically" by listening to the suggestions of party officials at lower levels (Law 3, Chapter 8, Article 41). It is not the candidate but rather the party centre that is responsible for submitting a candidate's name to allow him or her to stand for election, and it is the party symbol, not the candidate's name, which appears on the ballot. The party has the authority to replace a candidate who ceases to serve during the legislative term from among those candidates on its permanent list in the same area in which the retiring deputy serves (Law 4, Chapter 3, Article 14). All of these stipulations have taken power and manoeuvring room away from individual candidates and lodged that power with the party centre. This situation can be contrasted strongly with the relatively weak parties of Brazil, where individual candidates build their own support bases and are little indebted to the national party.

Furthermore, according to the work rules of Indonesia's Upper House, the MPR, decision-making in the legislature is to be, "as far as possible", by consensus (*musyawarah*) among the various factions rather than by up-down votes on assorted proposals (similar rules can be cited for the Lower House as well).[25] This has had different effects on the parties. On the one hand, all party factions (together with the military and functional groups) are guaranteed a say on pending legislation. This gives power to small parties and factions to be heard on all national issues. On the other hand, decision-making by consensus has concentrated a great deal of power in the leadership of the parties in Parliament, to the detriment of their members; leaders can agree to a matter on which individual members may have had a chance to have a say but not to register any meaningful choice. According to PDI-P legislator and democratic activist Aberson Marle Sihaloho, "Those who have the power in the House are the party leaders, not the people."[26]

The list above is a sampling of ways in which the laws and legislative work rules have enabled the parties, and particularly the party centres, to become extremely powerful. The power of the party centres has enabled party leaders to move party vehicles at their will, regardless of the wishes of the population. It is to popular views of the parties that we now turn.

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Examining Attitudes Towards Parties

The current reaction against the parties reflects public opinion generally. Indonesians, who from the outset of the transition have been ambivalent about political parties, seem to have become less enamoured of the parties over time.

To get a clear picture of Indonesian views, public opinion must be studied and measured. However, public opinion polling in a nation emerging from a long period of authoritarian rule is problematic on many levels. Will respondents answer honestly or attempt to give "the right answer" to "please" the interviewer? Mahir Mangahas, a well-known pollster from the Philippines, points to a number of problems in polling in Southeast Asia. He cites particularly the lack of experience of pollsters and the ability of polls to impact the political process and thus to attract "fakes".[27] In this study, data from a selection of methodologically strong polls conducted from 1998 to 2002 are used. (Table 1 provides information on the polls considered in the discussion). Occasionally, sound, urban telephone polls are brought in to the discussion (always with a disclaimer); this is necessary because, in some cases, this is the only type of opinion information available. Additionally, the results of a series of focus group interviews, bearing directly on the parties, is considered.

In defence of relying on public opinion research in the Indonesian context, public opinion polling in Indonesia since 1998 appears to provide an extremely consistent, though not unchanging, portrait of Indonesian views. Survey after survey has shown that the public's primary concern is the economy. In the February 1999 CH-PPS poll, the country's biggest problem was identified by 70 per cent of the respondents as the economy. This was seconded in the Voice of the People poll, conducted just after the 1999 elections. Asked what the most important task for the new government was, 64 per cent responded that the economy should be improved. Political issues ranked a distant second, with only 28 per cent. The economy was again the top problem in the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) 2001 poll, with 53 per cent ranking this as the most important issue compared with its next most prominent contender, conflict among the political élite, with 17 per cent (the poll was conducted during the height of the impeachment crisis). In the IFES 2002 poll, 70 per cent placed the economy first, with only 11 per cent choosing the next most common response, conflict among the political élite.

In addition to the consistency of views on such issues as the economy, polls, such as the 1999 elections themselves, confirm the reformist but not radical views of the Indonesian public. While the

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TABLE 1
Major Indonesian Opinion Polls

Poll Conducted by	*Reference to Poll in Text*	*Date Conducted*	*Sample Size (N)*	*Scope*
International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES)[28]	IFES 1998–1999	Dec 1998–Feb 1999	1,507	National
Clearing House-*Pendidikan Pemberi Suara*[29]	CH-PPS	February 1999	2,593	National
Polling Centre[30]	Voice of the People	June 1999	4,100	National
IFES[31]	IFES 1999	August 1999	1,520	National
IRI/LP3ES[32]	IRI 2000	November – December 1999	Unknown	Focus groups, 3 each in 7 provinces.
Indonesian Consortium for Public Opinion Polling, MPR, and DPR[33]	IFES 2001	May – June 2001	3,440	National
LP3ES/CESDA[34]	LP3ES	January 2002	1,236	Urban/10 cities, both Java and non-Java
IFES[35]	IFES 2002	March – April 2002	3,580	National
LP3ES/CESDA[36]	LP3ES II	June 2002	1,250	Urban/10 cities, both Java and non-Java

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sights and sounds of Indonesia's "People Power" movement in 1998 might cause us to overestimate support for political change, the IFES 1998–99 poll found that only 57 per cent thought Soeharto's resignation was a good thing. The IFES 1999 poll found that, in contrast to a clean-sweep reform which would overturn Soeharto-era officials, most Indonesians (62 per cent) favoured retaining existing governors and regents to the end of their terms. In perhaps the most surprising finding, the IFES 1999 poll found that 77 per cent of respondents had a very or somewhat favourable impression of the military. These views may not be in keeping with general impressions of Indonesian politics, but they do seem to be in keeping with the results of Indonesia's 1999 elections. The large vote received by Megawati Soekarnoputri's PDI-P was in some senses a vote for reform. On the campaign trail, however, the party head was much more ambivalent. She spoke about the need for national unity, support for the 1945 Constitution, and Indonesia's heterogeneous population as a brake on political change, all issues with which Soeharto himself would have had little quarrel. In important ways, the opinion polls picked up something that outside political observers, perhaps because of their own democratic blinders and excitement, may have missed.

With regard to attitudes towards the parties, awareness of the parties has increased since the transition. In 2001, 42 per cent of respondents could name five or more of the contemporary political parties. As reported in the IFES 2002 poll, that number has risen to 61 per cent.

Are the parties trusted to lead? The Voice of the People poll, conducted in Indonesia immediately after the elections in June 1999, rated parties last among those trusted as capable or strongly capable of leading the country through change. The parties ranked behind the students (with 87 per cent ranking as capable or strongly capable), citizen groups (77 per cent), the media (77 per cent), the President (at that time still Soeharto's chosen successor, Habibie — 75 per cent), and the Parliament (72 per cent). However, with a level of trust of 62.8 per cent, Indonesia's parties compare favourably with those in Russia and elsewhere. Early polls in Russia (1993–95) showed levels of trust far below those in Indonesia, ranging from only 4–9 per cent.[37] This was low, as were the levels of trust expressed in parties in other new democracies: Korea (1997) 20 per cent, the Czech Republic 15 per cent, Poland 9 per cent, Hungary 11 per cent, Romania 19 per cent, Bulgaria 13 per cent (all but Korea, 1999).[38]

The difference between data on trust in parties gathered in Indonesia and elsewhere raises questions as to comparability. A thorough examination of Indonesian opinion polls shows that Indonesians are, at

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this point, extremely likely to express trust in any given institution. So, more germane than the absolute value of trust expressed should be the relative level of trust expressed. In June 1999, when the supposed "euphoria" of the elections was in full bloom, Indonesians cited parties as the *least trusted* institution out of a menu of choices.

In a follow-up on the question of party trust, the IFES 2002 poll found that only 32 per cent felt that the parties had the ability to support the aspirations of the people, a fundamental function of the parties in a democratic system and consistently cited as important by Indonesians when addressing the question of political parties. Despite this low figure for the overall faith in the political parties, the levels of trust expressed in individual political parties were high. The least trusted party of the five top performers in the elections, Golkar was still trusted by 50 per cent of respondents. The PDI-P finished at the top.

One question asked in several polls was the degree of acceptance of a multi-party system. This is extremely important because fatigue with the sheer number of parties and chaos of democracy was complicit in the delegitimating of Indonesia's earlier democratic experiment in the 1950s. In several of the IFES polls, Indonesians were asked about the ideal number of political parties. The results, as shown in Table 3, show more acceptance over time of the existence of a multi-party system, albeit not a hyper-party system as Indonesia currently possesses.

As the table makes clear, from 1998 to 1999, large numbers of Indonesians became increasingly comfortable with a multi-party system of 3-9 parties as "ideal" for the country. Few supported one- or two-party systems. Similarly, few supported ten or more parties as ideal. These results, taken with Indonesia's election results, in which only

TABLE 2
Trust in Individual Political Parties, 2002

Party	*Trust (percentage)*	*Do Not Trust (percentage)*
PDI-P	72	12
Golkar	50	NA
PKB	61	27
PPP	67	20
PAN	61	26

NOTE: This table is based on data from respondents who expressed awareness of the given political party, a subset of the total sample. Parties are PDI-P=Partai Demokrasi Indonesia — Perjuangan, PKB=Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, PPP=Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PAN=Partai Amanat Nasional.
SOURCE: International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) survey 2002.

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TABLE 3
The Ideal Number of Parties

Number of Parties	*IFES 1998–99 (December 1998–February 1999) (percentage)*	*IFES 1999 (August 1999) (percentage)*
0	–	–
1	1	2
2	3	3
3-9	66	84
Many 10+	6	6
Don't Know/No Response	24	5

SOURCES: IFES 1998–99; and IFES 1999.

seven parties finished with sizeable support, show that the system is evolving thus far in line with Indonesian perceptions about the ideal party system, at least as far as the number of strong competitors is concerned. As mentioned above, the government's draft of the revised election law, with its tough requirements for parties to compete in the elections, is in keeping with these popular perceptions.

Unfortunately, the ideal number of parties was not followed up in subsequent national-level polls. An urban telephone poll, conducted by LP3ES/CESDA (LP3ES II) in mid-2002, found that 66 per cent of respondents favoured a system of between one and ten political parties. Only 24 per cent favoured a system of more than eleven parties, or a system without a limit on the number of parties.

Do parties make things better? Are they positive? Here we have little data with which to work. The IFES 1998–99 poll asked a question in this area, but the post-election polls did not follow up. In the IFES 1998–99 poll, when asked whether parties make things better, worse, or do not have much effect, Indonesians answered as follows: make things better — 34 per cent; make things worse — 28 per cent; do not have much effect — 9 per cent; don't know/no response — 28 per cent. These views represent strong ambivalence towards the parties, already early in the transition.

IRI 2000, the focus group study, dealt with the parties specifically. Speaking to groups of individuals across seven provinces, the International Republican Institute (IRI) found that people expect the parties to represent their interests but the parties are seen by the population as not yet "ready to serve the people". As stated in the focus group report, the parties are seen to advocate their particular interests

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more than those of the people. Condemning the parties, they are seen now as behaving like those of the New Order. Similar sentiments were recorded in the IFES 2002 poll, in which only 27 per cent of the respondents thought that the parties were interested in popular participation. This answer was beaten by 37 per cent of the respondents who believed the parties were more interested in pursuing their own political interests.[39]

Most damaging for the parties was the LP3ES poll conducted in February 2002. This was an urban, telephone poll, but it did stretch from Java to the Outer Islands. It presents an alarming level of dissatisfaction with the parties, at least in the urban areas. Pollsters asked: which party puts the people's interests first? The results are presented in Table 4, as broken down by self-described party affiliation.

The poll shows a tremendous lack of faith in the parties. Ignoring supporters of "other" parties for the moment, PKB voters were the most likely to say that their party puts the people's interest first (48 per cent). A breakdown of party supporters, as reflected in the opinion polls, has shown that PKB supporters are among the least educated, least well off, and least interested in politics.[40] Therefore, it is not surprising that they would be relatively more satisfied, or perhaps complacent. The PDI-P was the next most highly rated by its own supporters as putting the people's interest first. Yet, we should not be too impressed. The PDI-P markets itself as the party of the Indonesian common man, but only 39 per cent of party supporters actually think that the party puts the people's interests first. This is shocking and important. The supporters of the PBB and PK were only slightly less likely to say that their parties put the people's interests first, with 38 per cent and 35 per cent respectively.

Machinations certainly seem to have taken a toll among PAN supporters (did this include former PAN supporters? We do not know). Only 22 per cent of PAN supporters said that their party put the people's interests first. Golkar and the PPP had even lower votes, with just 11 per cent and 17 per cent respectively.

Of course, the most striking aspect of the table is the large share of respondents saying that *no* party puts the people's interests first. The results varied but were overall startlingly high. Among the PDI-P supporters, 44 per cent said that no party put the people's interest first; among Golkar supporters, 62 per cent; PPP supporters, 67 per cent; and PAN supporters, 57 per cent. The results were lower for the PBB (31 per cent), PK (35 per cent), and PKB (37 per cent). The supporters of smaller parties, the "other" in the table, seem relatively more satisfied. Unfortunately, we do not know how many respondents were in this category. A small number of respondents may have skewed the results.

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TABLE 4
The Party that Emphasizes the People's Interest, by Self-reported Party Affiliation of Respondent, LP3ES

The Party that Emphasizes the People's Interest	*Party Affiliation PDI-P*	*Party Affiliation Golkar*	*Party Affiliation PPP*	*Party Affiliation PKB*	*Party Affiliation PAN*	*Party Affiliation PBB*	*Party Affiliation PK*	*Party Affiliation Other*
PDI-P	39	11	7	4	7	–	–	46
Golkar	2	11	2	4	1	–	–	–
PPP	2	4	17		–	–	6	–
PKB	3	1	2	48	–	–	6	–
PAN	1	4	5	4	22	–	6	–
PBB	1	–	–	–	–	38	–	–
PK	1	–	–	–	8	6	35	–
None	44	62	67	37	57	31	35	27
Lain	1	3	–	–	–	–	–	18
DK/NR	5	5	–	4	6	13	12	–

NOTE: Party acronyms are: PDI-P=Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan; PPP=Partai Persatuan Pembangunan; PKB=Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa; PAN=Partai Amanat Nasional; PBB=Partai Bulan Bintang; PK=Partai Keadilan.
SOURCE: LP3ES poll.

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Summing up the poll results, one can see that Indonesians entered the post-Soeharto period already ambivalent about political parties, divided as to whether parties make things better or worse. The parties were seen as capable of leading change but, importantly, less capable than a slew of other actors. Awareness about the parties has increased during the transition, as has acceptance of a limited multi-party system. However, complaints against and disaffection from the parties are confirmed in the IRI focus group and the urban LP3ES polls.

Conclusion

This article has shown that the anti-party reaction currently observed in Indonesia is a result of the legacy of anti-party attitudes from the past, the parties' own actions during the transition period, their strong legal position which has allowed them to behave impervious to popular censure, and contemporary public attitudes towards the parties. Those showing the reaction, acting against the parties, claim to be acting for the people to bring the political system more under popular control. Anti-party attitudes could be observed almost immediately after Soeharto's fall. It is only since 2001, however, that those attitudes have crystallized into concrete steps to "roll back" the parties' power. The impeachment of Abdurrahman Wahid seems to have been a turning point in allowing the anti-party reaction to proceed.

What does the anti-party reaction mean? Certainly, it has become an important lens through which contemporary Indonesian politics is considered. Non-governmental organization activists and academics are pushing for institutional reforms they hope will rein-in the parties and make them more responsive to constituents. The parties themselves have acted to protect their positions, while at the same time responding in small ways to the anti-party movement. The quintessential example of this was the MPR's noting of the push for an independent constitutional commission in August 2002, while at the same time failing to create an independent commission with any teeth.

The anti-party reaction will likely continue through the creation of new political laws expected in late 2002 or early 2003. The Interior Ministry under former military official Hari Sabarno has been keen to rein-in the parties, and it was the Interior Ministry which oversaw the drafting of the government's version of the new elections law. However, it will be the parties in Parliament that will hammer out the final versions of the new laws. The degree to which the new laws respond to popular anti-party attitudes will depend greatly on an active oversight of a hitherto opaque political process.

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Anti-party attitudes and the anti-party reaction are important because they carry within them the seeds of the delegitimation of the political parties in time. This is a vital issue. Political parties are the core of Indonesia's evolving democratic political society. Together with other arenas, such as legal and civil society, a legitimate political society must be in place in order for democratic consolidation to proceed. An anti-party reaction that leads to healthy curbs on the parties' power will be conducive to democratization in the longer term. An unrestrained anti-party reaction could contribute to delegitimating the parties and democracy.

NOTES

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2. Those taking a stand against the political leaders' resignation from their parties were few, and their positions failed to generate great popular support. According to Ichlasul Amal of Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, "Actually, public positions such as those of the president, the vice president, and ministers are political positions, just like positions in political parties. They are not bureaucratic positions. So, I don't think worries about such dual positions are that significant". See, "Dual Leadership of Parties and Public Office Not in Conflict", *Jakarta Post*, 29 August 2001. Online: http://www.thejakartapost.com/ (accessed on 29 August 2001).
3. "Government Leaders Told to Quit Top Party Posts", *Jakarta Post*, 17 October 2001 [ONLINE] http://www.thejakartapost.com [accessed on 16 October 2001].
4. "National Leaders Putting Parties Ahead of Country, Analysts Say", *Jakarta Post*, 16 October 2001. Online: http://www.thejakartapost.com/ (accessed on 15 October 2001).
5. MPR Decree Number 1, 2002, on the Establishment of a Constitutional Commission.
6. Those parties are (in order of vote performance in the 1999 elections): Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan; Golkar; Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa; Partai Persatuan Pembangunan; Partai Amanat Nasional; and Partai Bulan Bintang.
7. An important change in August 2002 was the removal of non-elected members from both the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament. The military and functional group representatives will not see a reprise of their legislative roles from 2004.
8. Soekarno, "Nawaksara" (in Indonesian), *The Nine Statements*, 22 June 1966.
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12. "Are Indonesians Really Ready to Accept Democracy?" *Indonesian Observer*, 5 August 1999. Online: http://webhosting.indosat.net.id/io/0899/05/21.htm (accessed on 5 August 1999).
13. Personal interview with Jakob Tobing, 22 February 2000.
14. Jose Manuel Tesoro, "The Parties' Democracy", *Asiaweek*, 26 May 2000. Online:

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http://www.cnn.com/ASIANOW/asiaweek/magazine/2000/05/26/nat.indon1.html (accessed on 27 May 2000).

15. "Cak Nur: Saya Bersedia Dicapreskan", *Detik.com*, 18 October 1999. Online: http://www.detik.com/berita/199910/19991018-1517.htm.
16. "Mereka Tak Tahu Fungsi Partai", *Detik.com*, 18 October 1999. Online: http://www.detik.com/berita/199910/19991018-1611.htm.
17. Learning from Gus Dur's earlier experience, when she came to power in July 2001, Megawati Soekarnoputri refused to call her government a "coalition" Cabinet, which implies politicians engaged in horse-trading for positions and power (though Megawati, too, had debts to pay from her election). Instead, echoing one of Soekarno's influential constructs of traditional Indonesian village behaviour, Megawati's Cabinet was referred to as the Cabinet *Gotong Royong*, or Mutual Cooperation Cabinet.
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19. Secretariat General of the DPR, *Biro Humas dan Hukum*, "*Daftar Undang-Undang Tahun 2001 Berikut Status*", Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Indonesia, undated. Online: http://www.dpr.go.id/hukum/daftaruu%202001.htm (accessed on 2 August 2001).
20. Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Indonesians Grow Weary of Constant Political Turmoil", *Washington Post*, 2 August 2001. Online: http://www.washingtonpost.com (accessed on 2 August 2001).
21. 10 January 2002. Online: http://www.thejakartapost.com (accessed on 9 January 2002).
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23. IFES, "21 Most Asked Questions: About Early Election of President of Russian Federation 2000", 2000. Online: http://www.ifes.ru:8101/eng/obs_docs/6/index.html (accessed on 19 September 2001).
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25. Work Rules (*Tata Tertib*) of the MPR. See Chapter XI, Article 79.
26. "DPR Criticized for Poor Performance on Its Birthday", *Jakarta Post*, 30 August 2001. Online: http://www.thejakartapost.com/ (accessed on 29 August 2001).
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Human Security in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia

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Definitions of human security vary greatly, though they all coalesce on one central element: the emphasis on the need to protect the individual because it is only when individuals are secure that broader national and international institutions can themselves be legitimate and secure. The concept seems to be emerging at the moment as something of a rallying cry for civil society organizations in Southeast Asia because it provides them with a powerful argument against the state-centred model of economic and political development at the heart of the evolution of the region in recent decades. Many of these issues have been considered recently in the literature, especially for countries like Thailand and Indonesia, where notions of civil society and human security resonate quite strongly. This article considers three countries which so far have been neglected in such studies: Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

Introduction

The two or three years which followed the 1997–98 economic and political turmoil in Southeast Asia were marked by anxiety by governments and populations alike. Now, however, the climate in the region is much more defined by a sense of optimism and self-confidence. The models of political and economic development which had dominated the pre-crisis years have been re-examined. Looking at the current ebbing of democratic forms of governance in many countries of Southeast Asia, a strong argument can now be made that these traditional

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models yet again provide the main framework upon which the evolution of Southeast Asia is most likely to proceed in the short and medium terms.

In some ways, the economic crisis of 1997–98 is still a story which has not entirely ended. Some of the most important questions raised by the events of 1997–98 figure less prominently on the regional agenda at this point in time, but they speak to issues and social problems still left unresolved and which could potentially have an impact on the future course of development in Southeast Asia. The entire question of civil society and its role in the processes of change under way in Southeast Asia is certainly central in that respect. The devastating effects of the 1997–98 crisis undermined the credibility of the state-centred model of development which had underpinned the period of economic boom in the region and, as a consequence, it also allowed the emergence of numerous and varied civil society organizations (CSOs) intent on using that situation to force a realignment of politics and economics in the region towards more democratic and egalitarian forms. Student movements, religious groups, and indeed broad social coalitions were essential forces in the changes which swept the region from Bangkok to Manila, and through Jakarta.[1]

These groups have not disappeared. In fact, the current return to the *status quo ante* in Southeast Asia must entail among many of these groups a renewed desire to push through some of the broad reforms which seemed forthcoming during 1997–98. The phrase through which these aspirations are now often expressed, in order to capture the interest of regional policy-makers, is "human security". The 1994 *Human Development Report* of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)[2] is most frequently used to situate the entry of this concept in the vernacular of international politics. Essentially, the report argued that human emancipation, far from standing apart from international security, is in fact co-extensive with it: ensuring the protection and prosperity of the individual, through truncating the inequalities and social tensions which might later erupt through the types of conflicts at the heart of more traditional security concerns. Since then, the concept has gained currency in international circles. For instance, an international Commission on Human Security, co-chaired by Sadako Ogata, the former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and Amartya Sen, Nobel Laureate in Economics, was recently established. Its founding statement declares that its objective is "to promote public understanding, engagement and support of human security and its underlying imperatives".[3] Many countries have also endorsed the human security agenda: Canada, for example, has been among the most vocal proponents.[4] In Asia, Japan has been both the earliest and the main

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champion of the concept in regional security discussions.[5] In Southeast Asia, it was Thailand which came out most forcefully in favour of the concept through some of the initiatives of Surin Pitsuwan, the former Thai Foreign Minister. Surin was behind a Thai proposal put forth at the 1998 ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) advocating the creation of an "ASEAN-PMC Caucus on human security".[6] Additionally, much academic work is now being done in Southeast Asia to give credence to the idea that the imperatives of human development, underscored by the 1997–98 crisis, must be integrated in some fashion in the current regional thinking on security and stability.[7]

When this sort of question is raised by academics or CSOs, however, it is always with reference to those countries (for instance, Thailand) where the discourse of civil society and human security already has resonance or is gaining acceptance within activist circles. These concepts are much less often used, if ever, with respect to the three so-called transitional economies of Indochina: Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Civil society has been a clear and vigorous entity in Cambodia for some time now, but it has had very imprecise contours in Vietnam and Laos, where the strength of the one-party state has been such that it is usually difficult to distinguish society from the state itself. For its part, the notion of human security has remained, quite literally, foreign in these three countries in a political universe where the empowerment of the individual has most often been seen as a direct threat to the ideological canons of the one-party state or to the centralization of power within a small élite. This situation, however, might well be changing. Civil society is now a powerful actor in Cambodia. There has been a quite extensive reconsideration of past models of development and politics in both Vietnam and Laos. In that perspective, it is certainly pertinent to ask if the discourse of human security can provide some support and focus to the forces of civil society in these three countries as they develop themselves or simply try to coalesce in some fashion. To put it differently, it is surely valid to ask if the concept provides some guidance in the way these countries should approach the issue of post-communist development and changing state–society relations. Or, at least, the proponents of democratization in these countries might find therein a language through which they can perhaps at least engage their respective governments in a way which offers some chance of success. It is these different issues which, in this context, this article examines.

Civil Society and Human Security in Southeast Asia

What is, first of all, the internal logic of the discourse that links human security and civil society in Southeast Asia? What is currently proposed

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by the advocates of civil society is basically a reversal of conventional thinking on development in the region: where before a sustained focus on any type of social agenda was predicated on the success of state-building, it is now suggested that the development of state and economy should be focused on the integration of social demands for equality and democracy, and on the legitimacy and sustainability that this process can bring to the politico-economic agenda. This argument has most often led to an attempt to question the vocabulary of comprehensive security, the traditional phrase used in Southeast Asia to explain and justify a concern with varied dimensions of development engaged in terms of their relations with the state-building project. In turn, this has led to efforts to substitute this concept of the notion of human security with that of the convergence of all development and security concerns towards the emancipation and empowerment of the individual.[8]

This language of human security has been used by its advocates to make three fundamental and interrelated arguments regarding, first, the role that the state should play in guaranteeing individual freedom and development; second, the contribution that regional and international actors can make to this process; and, third, the configurations of state and non-state actors which are best able to support these endeavours. The first argument turns on the redefinition of the nature and scope of state activity within the processes of social development which is entailed by a readjustment of the relationship between state and society advocated by proponents of human security. It is articulated most often by making reference to a distinction between the provision by the state of so-called "freedom from fear" to its citizens, as opposed to that of "freedom from want". "Want", or needs, are associated here with threats to individual and group development, which stand above political debate because they constitute a clear and immediate impediment to human well-being. "Fear", for its part, is related to the danger posed by one group to another because it sees the latter as standing in the way of its political objectives. Needs are part of the nature of human life, while fear is the result of political will. Determining which is which speaks, in that context, to a distinction between unavoidable parameters of development, and much more malleable choices determined by political agendas and preferences.

This distinction is often taken up by the proponents of human security to underscore the importance of political choice in matters of development. What is portrayed as necessary and inescapable in the optic of comprehensive security, a process of development focused to a large degree on the enhancement of state and the economy, is in this sense thrown open to greater debate. The use of this sort of distinction about the roles of the state in protecting from "want" and from "fear"

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allows the proponents of human security to discern in the traditional justifications for a state-centred approach to development in Southeast Asia the particular agenda of certain state and economic élites, and to demand that matters of development be decided on the basis of a broader social consensus. Moreover, it underscores how the state, as it endeavoured in the past to address "wants", was in fact marginalizing or oppressing many groups, thus creating "fear". This sort of language can offer the possibility of recasting the role of the state in a manner which brings greater force to arguments about the need to lessen the influence of state élites in the processes of development.[9]

The arguments on international responsibility and divisions of labour between state and non-state actors, which are part of the discourse on human security, follow from these ideas. Delinking state and society, in the first instance, and indeed arguing that the interests of one might run contrary to those of the other, leads quite immediately to the contention that groups and individuals in Southeast Asian societies could well want to define their hopes and priorities in terms of human rights or social welfare, and not in the terms set by the state, but through closer reference to more global standards. This goes directly against the tenets of the more traditional security and development discourse in the region, which assigns solely to the state the responsibility of defining the norms which are to guide and legitimize the different phases of the development process. In fact, it invites the idea that the state might be called to account for its actions on the basis of these supra-national standards. Furthermore, it suggests that the international community might be invited, if not urged, to help put them into effect, whether the state agrees with this situation or not. This last idea is associated most closely with positions propounded by Lloyd Axworthy when he was the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and it has in fact been questioned even by some dedicated proponents of human security — for instance, among the Japanese academic and policy communities.[10] It certainly remains as a line of inquiry on the extent to which issues of development have traditionally been deemed in Southeast Asia as matters to be debated only in terms of national standards and norms, rather than regional or global ones.

Arguments about the need to introduce new configurations of actors within these different processes also follow from all of these claims. Such arguments revolve most frequently around the role that civil society, which is often mentioned in Southeast Asia to encapsulate the different groups acting as a bulwark against the power of the state, can play in the promotion and implementation of human security. Reference is often made in that context to the way in which civil society organizations can now come to represent another layer in

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informal diplomatic channels in Southeast Asia — for instance, in the ASEAN Institutes for Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) consortium, which have been central in guiding and sustaining the momentum of regional discussions on changing conceptions of development and security. These track-three actors, to be added to the informal track-two diplomatic architecture of the region, would find there a structure which would augment both the scope and the quality of their interaction with governmental circles in their efforts to renegotiate the state–society relationship. Furthermore, the use of this language of civil society, given its international currency and legitimacy, can also be seen as part of the attempts of the proponents of human security to bring to bear on the states of the region global standards and norms on issues of individual and social welfare.[11]

The otherwise straightforward objective of making social welfare the focal point of development and security in Southeast Asia has so far turned out to be quite a complex process. This agenda is essentially strategic, in the sense that it speaks to a series of objectives that have to be attained if human security and its attendant dimensions of democratization and social justice are to be reached in Southeast Asia. It is underlain by what could perhaps be best termed as an intellectual agenda which, if it has not yet become as visible in the region as the more strategic objectives just outlined, nonetheless remains essential to them. This agenda concerns the ways of thinking which must be in place at a regional level if the objectives linked to the promotion of human security are to be widely embraced, or indeed simply accepted as plausible avenues of development in the region. This might not have been articulated in so many words in regional civil society circles, but the logic at work here certainly entails such considerations.

The foremost element of this intellectual agenda undoubtedly has to do with the introduction of the notion of agency within the regional discourse on security and development. In the more traditional approaches to these issues, embodied, for instance, in the concept of comprehensive security, they are understood to be not so much matters open to political debate but conditions which are imposed by the context in which the Southeast Asian states have found themselves during the last few decades. The sole focus on the development of the state and the economy, for instance, is often presented as an inescapable consequence of the frailty of political and economic institutions in the region engendered by the period of Western colonial rule. The promotion of human security can only rest, in that context, on a conceptual shift where these ideas are marginalized, and where in their place appears the notion that groups and individuals can be agents in the construction of their world, and that, even if elements of context do set constraints

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on the dynamics of development and security, debates and choices within these constraints are still possible. In other words, human security demands not only a movement among the actors of security which gives less importance to the state, and more to society. It also requires a shift in the very way security and development are conceptualized so that they are seen less as broad dynamics standing outside of human agency, and more as social constructions emanating from the potential of groups and individuals for self-determination.

A related element of this intellectual agenda is an attack against the relativism at the heart of much of the more traditional discourse on development and security. This relativist position, the idea that concrete conditions should determine the values underlying the processes of development and security, is rooted precisely in the emphasis on context present in a notion such as comprehensive security through its insistence that circumstances are the sole determinant of trajectories of development, to the exclusion, for instance, of more norms-based considerations. This relativism is embodied in the constant regional mantra to the effect that issues of security and development remain matters to be discussed internally within the state, and that any involvement by outside actors merely constitutes interference. Thinking about human security requires a readjustment in these relativist tenets of the regional discourse on security and development. Human security first promotes the self-determination of individuals and groups. This entails a series of debates taking place in social spaces, so to speak, rather than the political one delineated by the state, which might well have a transnational scope. There is certainly, at that level, the expression of profound reservations about the idea that the frame of reference of debates on security and development should remain circumscribed by the state, as well as the promotion of broader criteria of evaluation of these issues. More deeply than that, there is in the idea of self-determination contained in human security a search for the parameters of human identity which stand above context and circumstances. This leads directly to a shift in emphasis towards much more essentialist points of reference in the consideration of security and development than what has often been the norm in regional discussions on these issues. Conversely, human security requires regional thinking to move along these lines if its logic is to be accepted.

Lastly, beyond a strategic agenda and an intellectual one, the very logic of human security requires the implementation of a social agenda, in the sense that it necessitates certain specific dynamics of change to unfold in order to be able to develop itself. The central component here is one of the most basic and evident axioms on the discourse of human security: the implementation of human security in Southeast Asia can

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only be coextensive with the development of the rule of law in the region. The rule of law helps to erect the barriers of laws and rights which ensure that when individuals and groups rise to challenge the state on matters of development and security, they will be protected and not immediately cut down through violence or intimidation. It also entails the accountability of political and economic élites, and thus contributes to the project of opening up politico-economic decision-making which is central to human security. Lastly, and at a deeper level, the rule of law helps to eliminate arbitrariness in politics, and in that very process it demands of society a debate on the rules and norms able to guide politics which, in turn, is essential to the element of self-determination at the heart of human security.

At another level, there is certainly in human security a pressure to develop in Southeast Asia the multilateral structures and mechanisms which can support these types of processes. This speaks to the need, mentioned earlier, to anchor the pursuit of human security in a supra-national discourse on norms which can then be brought to bear on the state. Perhaps more directly, human security is a discourse of norms and values, which, if they are to retain their sway in politics, need the constant and widespread endorsement and reiteration of their importance that multilateral institutions are ideally suited to provide. Finally, multilateralism, as was also suggested above, needs to focus on the development of track-three activities, and in the integration of these activities within broader track-two and more official structures. In the need to recast the role of both governmental and CSO activities to set in motion this process, there is also a deeply social agenda concerned with the redefinition of the relationship of both state and society with international actors and processes.

Change in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia

What are the principal dynamics of change currently at work within Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and how can the kind of discourse outlined above reinforce those dynamics? To start with Cambodia, the country where change has been the most pronounced in recent years, one element defines at the moment the political horizon in the country, and, consequently, the current points of entry into issues of political and social liberalization there. The elections of mid-2003 are supposed to represent a continuation, and indeed an expansion, of the process of opening up all levels of politics to the dynamics of popular representation and accountability, which have been central components of the country's agenda since the internationally supervised elections of May 1993. The idea then was to develop in Cambodia an entirely new social contract:

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the goal of the elections was to replace the politics of factionalism and historical hatreds, understood at the time to be the root cause of the country's prolonged war, with a form of politics much more centred on the workings of democratic institutions, in the hope of creating non-violent, institutionalized channels through which conflict would from then on be expressed and resolved in Cambodian society.[12] In this context, the international community lent its support to a vast programme of institutional reform, but also to the growth of a series of actors in Cambodian society, such as non-government organizations (NGO) or the media, able to sustain this reform programme through their continued demands for the democratization of politics in Cambodia. Indeed, the very presence of these new actors was intended to demonstrate the rise of a new model of politics in the country: whereas before, the very conception of politics could be reduced to that of a struggle for power among autocratic factions, political life would now plausibly become much more the domain of groups drawing their legitimacy and their power from their attempts to embody and defend the popular will, and to fashion in this process different rules of the political game.[13] Ongoing efforts at democratization in Cambodia, articulated on the promotion of more widespread and democratic elections, must be understood as part of these broader dynamics. What is really at stake at the moment behind the mechanics of electoral organization is, in fact, a series of efforts aimed at the creation of a terrain where democratic forces in Cambodia can wield increasing power and impose over time a redefinition of the models of politics which have traditionally prevailed in the country.

Two more somewhat peripheral issues in current Cambodian politics must also be understood in that light. The imbroglio regarding the degree of involvement of the international community in the conduct of an eventual trial of Khmer Rouge leaders, which started in early 2002, when the United Nations announced that it was withdrawing from negotiations on the issue, should, whatever its outcome, underscore the need for legal reform in Cambodia. The culture of impunity which has long prevailed in Cambodia should certainly be scrutinized in that context. At a second level, the process of demobilization of the armed forces, which have been built over decades of protracted warfare in the country, is intended not only to free resources now devoted to the military so that they can be spent on social programmes, but also to diminish the power of the military in society and to thus reinvent civil–military relations in a way that favours civil society.

In Vietnam, the focal point of the proponents of reform in the country has certainly been, in the recent past, the Ninth Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP), held in late April 2001, and

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the choice at the Congress of Nong Duc Manh as the new Secretary General of the Party. Much was made of the fact that Manh belongs to the northern Tay minority, a signal not only that the Party would pay greater heed to minorities, but also that it was attempting, more broadly, to reduce the alienation felt in many segments of Vietnamese society by choosing someone who, as Chairman of the National Assembly, had in fact insisted on the role of the Assembly as a critic of the VCP. Manh's deft handling of policy issues at the Assembly was also presented as an assurance that he would be able to address the finer intricacies of the reform process in all its domestic and foreign policy dimensions.[14] He has to operate now, however, in circumstances which might well hamper most of his efforts. The central component of the reform process is, at the moment, the need to implement a reorganization of the economy which will shift the centre of gravity of economic development in Vietnam from state-controlled enterprises to the private sector — the movement towards a "socialist orientated market economy", in the phraseology of the VCP. At issue is the need to allow the most efficient firms and types of businesses in Vietnam to give to the country's economy as much impetus as is possible in an environment where new opportunities have been created by such arrangements as the ASEAN Free Trade Area and the bilateral trade agreement with the United States. As a corollary, there also stands the idea that a movement away from centralized government planning agencies in the economic sector will in turn give impetus to more decentralized and society-driven political processes. The dilemma, however, is that closing state-owned enterprises could well lead to extensive social turmoil on the part of workers who might be laid off in that process. Indeed, the very notion of a more decentralized economy is certain to be opposed by those, in the Party and in the military, who benefit from the economic *status quo* through their links with state-owned firms, or who simply fear the political ramifications of the process of economic decentralization.[15]

In this context, the larger issue of the political opening up of Vietnam is linked to three considerations. First, the proponents of this process have to adjust their efforts to what constitutes the central objective of the government and the Party: balancing, as is always the case in transition economies, economic and political openness in the country. Secondly, there is no specific terrain within the institutional and political infrastructure of the country in which to base efforts at democratization. Vietnam has made great strides recently in terms of the development of regulatory and legal systems, but these systems have been geared essentially towards the protection of private property and the attenuation of corruption in an effort to create an environment

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more welcoming to foreign investments. This framework of economic rights has not translated yet into a series of political rights and freedoms entrenched in the rule of law. Of course, mention is often made of the growing role of the National Assembly as an instrument of representative democracy, and indeed, the notion of "grassroots democracy" as a focus of local participation in policy-making is frequently put forward in the official discourse, but the idea that the rule of law could serve as a platform for the expression of individual and group rights and the reduction of the power of the state is still a distant prospect. There is, moreover, a great bubbling up of energy at the local level through voluntary associations, for instance, veteran's groups, which attempt to channel popular resentment towards the party bureaucracy. These efforts, however, often outpace the rhythm at which the party is willing to open up its structures to the changes that more popular participation would bring. There is also in Vietnam a state-endorsed civil society — women's organizations and the like — which has been sponsored, if not created, by the government, through which popular demands are supposed to be relayed to official circles. It remains true, however, that these groups often fail to capture or fully express the range of demands which issue from broad segments of the population.[16]

Indeed, at a third level, it is difficult to position precisely the very idea of democratization within the ideological context which is in place in Vietnam. The days of absolute belief in the canons of Marxism–Leninism are obviously long gone, if they ever really existed. The centrality of the principle of one-party rule remains, however, and with it the fear that simply giving importance to the idea of political decentralization could put an end to one of the concepts central to the legitimacy of the regime in Vietnam. In this perspective, it remains to be seen how the language of democracy can offer the prospect of a new social contract in the country which is credible, given the political resistance it entails, and the difficulty of anchoring it in the particular conditions which exist in Vietnam at the moment.

Quite obviously, the same is true of Laos. Change and pressure for an opening up of the political system in Laos were widely expected to come through the deliberations of the Seventh Party Congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP), held in March 2001. Many events had served as an ominous prologue for the Congress. In late 1999, there had been public protests in Vientiane, a previously unthinkable occurrence, to oppose the government's handling of the economy in the wake of the 1997–98 regional crisis. These events took place against the background provided by growing rumours that the upper echelons of the LPRP themselves were now embroiled in a power struggle. A widely cited article in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*

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argued that the top leadership of the Party was divided by three deep-running faultlines opposing younger cadres to the older generation in control of the Politburo, members of the ruling élite coming from the northern provinces and those coming from the south, and proponents of closer relations with China *vis-à-vis* those in favour of continued special relations with Vietnam. The main personality here was the Foreign Minister, Somsavat Lengsawat, who was seen as enticing young cadres from the north, like himself, and in favour of some form of *rapprochement* with China, to challenge the hold on power exercised by the mostly southern Party leadership with historical ties to Hanoi, represented by the LPRP leader and state President, Khamtay Siphandon, and the Prime Minister, Sisavath Keobounphan.[17] The possible tensions within the Lao leadership were also given a sharper relief by a wave of bombings in Vientiane in mid-2000. Though the bombings were never connected to a possible power play within the LPRP, and more likely explanations of their sources were focused on the settling of personal quarrels, they did contribute to an atmosphere of greater tension in Laos which one faction or another in the Party could have wanted to exploit to its advantage. When the Seventh Party Congress opened in the midst of these developments, tensions within the LPRP and widespread demands for broad reforms of the government's social and economic agenda were expected to usher in a change in the Party hierarchy, if not its main policies. This did not happen: most of the LPRP hierarchy remained intact, and there was no sense at all in the wake of the Congress that significant reforms were forthcoming. Indeed, not much has happened since then to give any indication that a process of reform is emerging in the country. This points to the fact that, within the LPRP, common political and ideological denominators are probably stronger than points of divergence, or at least that there is a broad consensus in place strong enough to prevent any major change in the structure of power in Vientiane. This situation also speaks of the fact that there does not exist an undercurrent of change in Laos similar to the broad social, economic, and political forces unleashed in Cambodia by the international intervention of 1991–93, and in Vietnam by the reorganization of the state–market relationship. The status quo might well sustain itself, in that perspective, simply because there are no clear alternatives to it.[18]

There is also an international dimension to the issue of change in Laos. The LPRP has traditionally relied on Vietnam in the post-revolutionary period to provide it with both the material means and the ideological underpinnings of its model of development. A change in Hanoi might thus over time, through example or pressure, herald one in Vientiane. However, even in this case, the centrality of stable state-to-

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state and party-to-party relations, in spite of changes in Hanoi, would clearly reinforce the existing power configurations at the top of the Lao hierarchy much more than it would allow for change and critique within that hierarchy. In other words, the very nature of the diplomatic framework through which Vietnam and Laos conduct their relations might hinder change in the former from having a direct effect on the latter. Conversely, however, a greater opening to the region, for instance, through the extensive economic links which already exist with Thailand, or through an intensification of the economic ties of the northern provinces with China's Yunnan province, as is seemingly advocated by many in the LPRP, could also lessen ties with Vietnam, and then perhaps the power of those in the Party who rely on Hanoi for support and legitimacy. Change here, however, would not equate with democratization: any pressure to open up the economy in Laos coming from Vietnam, China, or Thailand, would simply not entail parallel demands for an opening up of the political system.

Towards Human Security in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia?

What, then, of the development of human security in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos? Cambodia is now, at long last, a case for guarded optimism. The logic underlying the organization of elections in the country has the intention to bring about social and political commitment to the construction of the rule of law and representative democracy, which is at the heart of human security. The issue for CSOs in the country, in terms of the growth of human security, is thus the need to give to these efforts a synergy which will allow them to sustain each other over the long term, and also to defeat the resistance they are likely to encounter, either from the force of inertia exercised by weak or non-existent political and administrative structures able to support the movement towards a rights-based social contract, or from the more active resistance of those who see their power threatened by such a change. The succession of agendas linked to the construction of human security provides, in that perspective, a framework from which to consider in an integrated fashion the different aspects of the process of transition towards a rights-based political system under way in Cambodia, and a way of measuring, so to speak, what has been done, and what remains to be done, to attain that objective. The human security agenda also shows that, beyond the manifold party politics likely to favour, in the last analysis, Hun Sen and his close associates, the electoral process opens up a space where other groups — NGOs and the like — can attempt to promote a deeper agenda of change and democratization.

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One of the central components of the strategic agenda entailed by the construction of human security — the creation of spheres of autonomy for the individual from which to consider and critique the role and power of the state — is certainly linked, above all, to elections in the country. The mechanics of voting are often presented by NGOs, working in some sort of support capacity in the electoral process, as the opening up of space where individual power can emerge and be leveraged against that of the élites in place. This points to a need for vigilance during the 2003 elections, which has often been affirmed in international and domestic NGO circles.

There is another central issue: how should the sense of individual empowerment be sustained between elections through new habits of interaction with the different levels of government in Cambodia? On that basis, there is undoubtedly a case to be made for the development of an infrastructure in Cambodia allowing regional and domestic track-two and track-three actors to weigh in on post-election politics in the country and attest to the degree to which these politics uphold the ideals of democracy and personal emancipation set forth and monitored by the international community during the elections themselves. The most progressive work at that level has undoubtedly been done so far by the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP), under its director, Kao Kim Hourn. The CICP has held seminars involving members of CSOs and government agencies, where issues of international norms of good governance are central. The Institute's participation in the ASEAN-ISIS network provides a bridge, in that context, between these domestic actors and unofficial regional diplomatic circles devoted to issues of change and security in Southeast Asia.[19] The development of this type of infrastructure beyond what is done at the moment would not resolve by itself the issue of a sustained empowerment of the individual, nor would it have the power to force local and national governments to respect the wishes of the electorate. It could provide, however, a continuous examination of these issues beyond electoral periods, and while doing so, it would bring to bear on the different levels of government in place in Cambodia both the legitimacy drawn from its ascribing to international standards of human rights and the authority conferred on it by its attempt to represent broad segments of the Cambodian population.

The two other focal points of current Cambodian politics — the nature of a possible Khmer Rouge trial and the demobilization process — can also lend themselves to the same logic. Much needs to be done, at both levels, in terms of finding the concrete mechanics through which these processes can translate to a tangible expansion of the rule of law in the daily lives of Cambodians. There again, the engagement of

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civil society through a structure bringing track-two and track-three actors into contact with national and international circles involved in these two processes — the United Nations, the World Bank and the like — might be beneficial. These different strategies also entail, finally, the need for the proponents of rights-based politics in Cambodia to advance models of politics and security which can explain and justify all the changes they propose, and to support the broad dynamics of social transformation which these changes entail. The human security discourse is helpful here because it identifies, in terms of its intellectual and social agendas, some of the objectives which must be attained in this context. The call for greater democracy and the respect of universal norms of human rights to become an intrinsic part of the future evolution of Cambodia, for instance, is certainly unproblematic, especially in view of the profound political and social realignments that have marked the country in the past few years, and in which civil society is playing an ever larger role. However, one element of the agenda of social transformation linked to the development of human security — the growth of a web of track-two and track-three discourses able to support processes of democratization — still needs to be addressed in Cambodia. Recent experience has in fact been at odds with this objective — for instance, when the Hun Sen government reiterated forcefully in many different contexts its belief in the utmost sovereign right of Cambodia to determine its own destiny. An engagement of the government on this issue by domestic and regional track-two and track-three actors is needed here too.

If there is thus in Cambodia an array of processes through which it is possible to promote human security, Vietnam and Laos provide for less opportunity, though they do also offer some entry points in the development of the human security agenda. Vietnam presents, at the moment, a somewhat mixed picture. The arrival of a strong reformer seemingly intent on developing the role of the National Assembly as an organ of discussion and critique in Vietnam, a renewed concern for the welfare of minorities, and, above all, a formidable effort to reduce the role of the state in society in order to allow the expansion of market mechanisms, all augur well for the development in Vietnamese society of spaces for self-determination and power *vis-à-vis* government and bureaucracy. This is to be contrasted with the difficulty of pushing the current process of economic liberalization towards one of political liberalization, given the resistance of many in VCP circles to the idea, and, at a broader level, the lack of a model of political and economic development able to bridge the need for more political openness in Vietnam and the orthodoxy of one-party rule.

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This suggests that the opening up of space for rights-based politics in the country — the first component of the human security agenda — can only proceed through an expansion of the space for freedom and rights provided by the policy of economic openness. Continuing to strengthen the agencies and the regulatory and legal frameworks which ensure economic freedoms and rights, in other words, might well have as a corollary the enlargement of rights in the political realm, while an immediate focus on political liberalization *per se* could encounter too much resistance in the upper echelons of the VCP to have much chance of success. This suggests the need for nascent CSOs in Vietnam to engage to a degree the civil society structures endorsed by the state in the hope of finding some outlet for their demands which might be more palatable to government circles. More broadly, track-two and track-three actors involved in Vietnam have to establish some form of consultation between NGOs, international financial institutions present in Vietnam, the government, and others, on the best ways to handle both the political end results of the process of economic transition and the resistance these are likely to encounter in some quarters within the VCP. Defining track-three activity in Vietnam in that context is admittedly somewhat problematic, given the difficulty of delineating a space where civil society is truly independent from the state. The sustained presence of Vietnamese representatives in activities organized by ASEAN-ISIS — for instance, the annual Kuala Lumpur-based Asia-Pacific Roundtable, where issues related to civil society are now being handled with growing finesse — can perhaps provide an entry point for an engagement in Vietnam of regional norms on the development and independence of CSOs.

The social component of the human security agenda then has to be efforts to encourage the habit of multilateralism in Vietnam that will allow the country's integration in regional track-two and track-three structures and permit this kind of interplay. The intellectual component of this agenda can then be translated in an attempt, within that track-two and track-three infrastructure, to help delineate in a sustained but non-threatening fashion the model of development which would allow Vietnam to chart the future of political liberalization in the country, both in terms of the resistance the process encounters and the pressures that more global norms bring to bear on that process.

The prospects for the development of rights-based politics are dimmer in Laos. The sheer poverty of the country has not allowed the type of economic dynamism which provides, in Vietnam, a starting point for political realignments and reform. Moreover, foreign investments have remained low and thus have not created — the way they have in Vietnam — broad demands for the establishment of

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regulatory and legal frameworks able to protect these investments, and then serve to support political as well as economic rights. There is also in the LPRP at the moment a profound *immobilisme* which inhibits a decisive movement towards political liberalization even if critiques of the Party are mounting, both from within and without.

It is still possible to think, however, that the logic of human security could have some sway in the Lao context. If economic development fails to provide a point of entry in the construction of rights-based politics, there remains the idea that a fuller involvement of Laos within the regional diplomatic architecture, and certainly through its track-two and track-three dimensions, can provide a mechanism through which LPRP leaders can be quite directly engaged on the issue of regional norms of governance. The Lao component of the ASEAN-ISIS network, the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), is now developing its role at this level.

Moreover, there is at the moment in Laos a realization that the country needs to regionalize its economy which, if it has been truncated somewhat by the regional economic downturn of 1997–98, could be tapped in that manner. To a large degree, however, such habits of multilateralism, as well as the institutional and political configurations which can allow them to emerge, still have to be developed in Laos. In turn, this calls for the formulation of models of diplomacy able to bridge both the country's tradition of close relations to Vietnam with its focus on state-to-state relations and party-to-party relations, and the growing emphasis on track-two and track-three interaction in regional diplomacy. It is likely that at these levels the social and intellectual programme inspired by the pursuit of human security can have its greatest impact.

Conclusion

Ultimately, however, to understand the role that the broad human security agenda can play in the three transitional economies of Indochina, it is perhaps best to underscore again the nature of the forces which animate this agenda, and give it its current importance in Southeast Asia. In the final analysis, this agenda addresses the need for a concrete framework through which the diverse demands for change bubbling in many parts of the region can be expressed and implemented. There are, indeed, in the three transitional economies of Indochina, profound demands for a reorganization of politics through a new state–society relationship. In fact, in both Vietnam and Cambodia, there are considerable opportunities for quite decisive advances in that process. The language of human security also entails regional and international

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diplomatic approaches to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, which reflect this situation. This language allows movement from diplomacy, which has traditionally been focused on interaction with the political leadership and state apparatus in each of these three countries, to a more multi-faceted diplomacy which captures directly the full dimensions of the process of transition, and underscores the possibilities for change involved in this process. However, the work must begin. The different agendas outlined here perhaps offer some of the ways in which this can be done most fruitfully.

NOTES

1. On civil society in Southeast Asia and its role during the 1997–98 crisis, see, for example, Garry Rodan, "The Prospects for Civil Society and Political Space", in *Democracy, Human Rights, & Civil Society in South East Asia*, edited by Amitav Acharya, B. Michael Frolic, and Richard Stubbs (Toronto: University of Toronto – York University Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, 2001); and Pierre P. Lizée, "Civil Society and Regional Security: Tensions and Potentials in Post-Crisis Southeast Asia", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 22, no. 3 (December 2000): 550–69.
2. United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Human Development Report 1994* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
3. Commission on Human Security, *Press Release – Plan for the Establishment of the Commission on Human Security*, 24 January 2001.
4. The best exposition of the Canadian efforts at that level is Rob McRae and Don Hubert, eds. (with Introduction by Lloyd Axworthy, and Foreword by Kofi Annan), *Human Security and the New Diplomacy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001).
5. See Tadashi Yamamoto. "Human Security: What it Means and What it Entails", in *Proceedings of the 14th Asia Pacific Roundtable, June 2000* (Kuala Lumpur: ISIS-Malaysia, 2001).
6. See the rubric "human security" in David Capie and Paul Evans, *The Asia-Pacific Security Lexicon* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002).
7. The work of Amitav Acharya is certainly emblematic of this line of thought. See Amitav Acharya, "Human Security: East Versus West", *International Journal* LVI, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 442–60. See also, for instance, Pranee Thiparat, ed., *The Quest for Human Security: The Next Phase of ASEAN?* (Bangkok: Institute of Security and International Studies, 2001).
8. A basic reference on the notion of comprehensive security is Muthiah Alagappa, "Comprehensive Security: Interpretations in ASEAN Countries", in *Asian Security Issues: Regional and Global*, edited by Robert Scalapino et al. (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California at Berkeley, 1988). A superb and detailed account of the notion of human security is found in Caroline Thomas, *Global Governance, Development and Human Security. The Challenge of Poverty and Inequality* (London: Pluto Press, 2000).
9. On the distinction between "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want" in the language of human security, see Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Human Security in the Asia Pacific: Current Trends and Prospects" (Paper presented at the 15th Asia Pacific Roundtable, Kuala Lumpur, June 2001.)

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10. On the positions defended by Lloyd Axworthy, see Lloyd Axworthy, "Canada and Human Security: The Need for Leadership", *International Journal* (Spring 1997), pp. 183–96. On the contrast between the Axworthy position and that adopted by some Japanese scholars, see Tadashi Yamamoto, "Human Security: What it Means and What it Entails".
11. On civil society and the role of track-three in regional security discussions, see Lizée, "Civil Society and Regional Security: Tensions and Potentials in Post-Crisis Southeast Asia".
12. See Pierre P. Lizée, *Peace, Power, and Resistance in Cambodia. Global Governance and the Failure of International Conflict Resolution* (London and New York: Macmillan and St. Martin's Press, 2000).
13. On these issues, see Kao Kim Hourn, *Emerging Civil Society in Cambodia: Opportunities and Challenges* (Phnom Penh: Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace, 1999).
14. On the Ninth Congress of the VCP, see Margot Cohen, "Vietnam – Safety Valve of the People", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 3 May 2001, pp. 19–20.
15. On the relationship between these issues and the Ninth Congress of the VCP, see Margot Cohen and Adrian Edwards, "Vietnam – Have Your State and Eat It Too", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 March 2001, pp. 22, 24. On the broader context of these issues, see David Koh, "State-Society Relations in Vietnam: Strong or Weak State?, in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2001* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2001).
16. On these issues, see David Koh, "The Politics of a Divided Party and Parkinson's State in Vietnam", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 23, no. 3 (December 2001): 533–51.
17. Shawn W. Crispin and Bertil Lintner, "Laos – Behind the Bombings", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 July 2000, pp. 26–27.
18. On these issues, see Yves Bourdet, "Laos in 2001: Political Introversion and Economic Respite", *Asian Survey* 42, no. 1 (January/February 2002): 107–14.
19. See Sue Downie and Damien Kingsbury, "Political Development and the Reemergence of Civil Society in Cambodia", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 23, no. 1 (April 2001): 43–64, which makes explicit reference to the work of the CICP in that context.

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Partnership for Peace in Asia: ASEAN, the ARF, and the United Nations

MELY CABALLERO-ANTHONY

The end of the Cold War has renewed attention on regionalism and a reconsideration of the security role of regional security organizations in promoting international peace and security. However, the capacities of regional organizations differ, particularly when analysed within the general framework of peace operations. In Asia, for example, the nature and types of peace operations undertaken by regional organizations such as ASEAN and the ARF have been remarkably different when compared with regional organizations elsewhere. This article examines the nature of peace operations in the Asia-Pacific region and explores the possibilities for "partnership in peace" between the United Nations, on the one hand, and ASEAN and the ARF, on the other. It argues that the changing strategic environment requires a more pro-active engagement of ASEAN and the ARF in peace operations, which would involve reviewing and/or changing existing conflict prevention mechanisms to be more responsive to current challenges.

Introduction

There has been renewed attention on regionalism and a reconsideration of the security role of regional security organizations since the end of the Cold War. Several factors account for this new enthusiasm. Among them is the fact that in the post-Cold War era, regional relations have expanded and regional areas have become "substantially more important venue(s) of conflict and co-operation than in the past".[1] Juxtaposed with this is the increasing security role of the United Nations (UN) after

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being involved in major conflicts, such as in the Gulf War, Cambodia, and more recently those in the Balkans. This has severely stretched the resources of the UN and has been made even more acute with the expansion of peacekeeping operations it has undertaken in recent years. Moreover, with UN member-nations cutting back on financial contributions and support, the UN's capacity to undertake additional responsibilities has become more complex, while the will of its dominant members has often been weak.[2] It is hardly surprising therefore that some countries have called for the UN to scale-down its involvement in conflict situations and instead rely on so-called "coalitions of the willing".

Given the limitations of UN peace operations, a task-sharing arrangement between the UN and regional organizations has become imperative to advance regional, as well as, global order. This idea was forcefully argued by former UN Secretary-General Boutrous Boutrous Ghali, in his 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping.*[3] However, the role assigned to regional organizations is not really new. Chapter VIII of the UN Charter had ascribed to "regional arrangements and agencies" the task of dealing with "matters in relation to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action".[4] Given this function, regions and regional organizations were also supposedly to become "islands of peace" and "building blocks of peace".[5]

The main objectives of this article are twofold. First, the article will analyse the nature of peace operations in Asia which are significantly different when compared with the types of peace operations by regional organizations elsewhere. Secondly, it will examine the possibility of closer co-operation and partnership between the United Nations and regional arrangements in the resolution and management of regional conflicts. The article argues that peace operations in Asia — which are mostly in the area of conflict prevention, exemplified by the types of mechanisms found in ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) — have made valuable contributions towards regional peace. In spite of this considerable success, however, the changing strategic environment requires a more pro-active engagement of regional organizations, which involve reviewing and/or changing existing mechanisms to be more responsive to current challenges.

At the outset, it would be useful to review the relationship between regional organizations and the UN over the past decades, and to examine the dynamics of these relationships in the area of conflict resolution and management. This brief historical overview provides a context for the analyses of the types of processes and mechanisms that both ASEAN and the ARF have developed from the time they were established.

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Regional Organizations and Regional Security

Since the task-sharing idea between the UN and regional organizations was adopted, there have been doubts about the security role of regional organizations and their relationship *vis-à-vis* the UN. Indeed, while the basic idea of Chapter VIII in the UN Charter was to enable and empower regional organizations to settle local disputes before referring them to the UN, the record has been, at the very least, chequered, while at worst unimpressive. As one earlier study noted, forty-five years hence, the UN has found "only limited use for regional organizations".[6] The failure of such a relationship was attributed largely to superpower conflict during the Cold War. The *realpolitik* of the Cold War became the stumbling block to what could have been a potentially close relationship between regional organizations and the UN when the major antagonists — the United States and the Soviet Union — excluded the UN Security Council from being involved in regional conflicts in which they were engaged. Consequently, the geopolitics of the Cold War inhibited the realization of the ascribed role of regional organizations as the "first stop" base in local conflicts.

For many Third World countries, the perceived emasculation of the United Nations was a great source of frustration. Against the trend at that time, it was not surprising that there was much disillusionment among many Third World states about the efficacy of regionalism as a means of resolving conflicts. Thus, Joseph Nye's earlier attributions of regions as "islands of peace" became more like "pawns" of superpower rivalry.

Nonetheless, in spite of this unimpressive record, the *raison d'etre* of regional organizations was revived. As mentioned in the introduction, the end of the Cold War and the structural changes that followed, particularly the expansion of regional relations without the overlay of bipolar politics, have seen the emergence of new conflicts both at the inter-state and intra-state level.

Apart from the factors outlined above, there were also other salient reasons that led to this new impetus for regional organizations to manage regional conflicts. Among these had been the renewed desire on the part of medium and small powers for greater control over their strategic environment. This desire for regional autonomy was a characteristic feature of several regional organizations in Asia and Africa, mirrored in such slogans as "Asian solutions to Asian problems". Adopting regional solutions to regional problems was predicated on the fact that regional actors felt they were best suited to mediate in local conflicts, as they understood the dynamics of strife and cultures more intimately than outsiders. Moreover, issues which were related to local

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conflicts would most likely be given more attention in regional fora than in global ones, since the latter have a much broader agenda.[7]

Finally, another significant factor stems from the effects of economic regionalism, reflected in the emergence of regional economic groupings like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), among others. These groups have had the effect of enhancing self-confidence among regional states and have encouraged them to emphasize greater self-reliance in matters of security.

Thus, in spite of the ambiguous experiences of regional organizations in the past, there is not only a growing realization, but also appreciation, that they can play a significant role in managing regional conflicts. More importantly, experiences have also shown that some regional organizations have in fact demonstrated reasonable success in preventing and managing conflict in specific regions. In Asia, the experience of ASEAN and, to some extent, the ARF, has been instructive in efforts at regionalizing peace.[8]

Regionalization of Peace in Asia: The Experience of ASEAN and the ARF

ASEAN and the Security of Southeast Asia

At least until the onset of the Asian financial crisis in 1997, ASEAN had been cited as one of the most successful regional organizations by many observers, scholars, and even its major critics.[9] Its success lay in the very fact that ASEAN had succeeded in preventing its members from going to war with each another. As many scholars have already noted, in the early 1960s Southeast Asia was considered the Balkans of the East.

If one were to go back to Joseph Nye's notion of "islands of peace", it could be argued that ASEAN's *raison d'etre* has been mainly about *regional reconciliation.* A building block to peace in what was once a trouble-ridden region, the formation of ASEAN in 1967 laid the foundations for bridging the differences between the non-communist states of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, and the communist states of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, as well as the isolated state of Myanmar. ASEAN grew from the original five non-communist states with the inclusion of Brunei in 1984 after its independence from Britain, and Vietnam in 1995. In 1997, Laos and Myanmar became members, and in 1999 Cambodia was admitted as its tenth member. Bringing together all the states in Southeast Asia had always been the vision of the founding fathers of ASEAN.

More importantly, however, ASEAN was essentially a response by states within a sub-region that was bedevilled by intramural disputes

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between Malaysia and Indonesia over the formation of the Federation of Malaya in 1963. This led to the period of *Konfrontasi*, and the dispute between Malaysia and the Philippines over the territory of Sabah. These major conflicts were, in fact, stumbling blocks to earlier efforts by states in Southeast Asia to form a regional association, and became the major reasons why the first two attempts to establish a regional grouping — the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) in 1961, and MAPHILINDO in 1963 — failed.[10] With the formation of ASEAN, the sub-regional states provided themselves with a stable structure of relations for managing and containing tensions among governments of corresponding political disposition. Thus, ASEAN's formation had, to all intents and purposes, become a diplomatic device for regional reconciliation,[11] which, in turn, undergirded regional peace and security.

The Processes and Mechanisms of Conflict Management. If ASEAN has been essentially about regional reconciliation, underpinning its relative success has been its mechanisms in conflict management. Unlike other regional organizations which have developed more structured and formal conflict resolving mechanisms, ASEAN's processes and approaches are quite different. To understand the particular nature of these mechanisms, a distinction is drawn here between the processes of conflict resolution and conflict management. According to C.R. Mitchell, conflict resolution is the elimination and termination of conflict, involving the fundamental differences and grievances underlying the conflict. Conflict management, on the other hand, involves the elimination of violence or a de-escalation of hostilities without really eliminating the root cause(s) of conflict.[12]

There are several mechanisms which regional institutions can employ to manage conflicts. Muthiah Alagappa provides a very useful analytical framework that identifies the strategies of conflict management available to regional organizations. These strategies would usually depend on: (1) the nature of the conflict — whether domestic, or interstate and involving external actors; and, (2) at which stage conflict management is, that is, prevention, containment, or termination. Moreover, the choice of which mechanisms to use — either the formal mechanisms (such as third-party mediation, arbitration, internationalization, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding) or informal mechanisms (such as assurance building, and norm-setting) — would also be largely dependent on the capabilities and resources available to these regional institutions.[13]

In ASEAN's case, and to a large extent also the ARF's, the types of mechanisms they have used to manage conflict can be classified as being mostly informal and characteristically limited to norm-building.

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ASEAN's Mechanisms of Conflict Management: The ASEAN Way?.[14] Much has already been written about ASEAN's informal processes or mechanisms of conflict management. This does not mean, however, that ASEAN has no formal mechanisms. In this latter category, the institutionalized meetings, such as the ASEAN Summits, the annual meetings of ASEAN Foreign Ministers (AMM), meetings among economic ministers, and meetings of other ministers and senior officials (SOMs) which fall within the ambit of ASEAN's political, economic and security co-operation, provide the venues and opportunities where bilateral and regional issues are addressed. However, bilateral disputes are handled bilaterally through joint commissions and committees.

The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), which came into force in 1976, has been the only attempt by ASEAN to provide a formal mechanism of conflict management and conflict resolution in the region. A salient feature of the TAC was its establishment of a code of conduct among regional states according to explicitly prescribed, universally accepted, principles and provisions for the peaceful settlement of disputes. These basic principles are: (1) mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations; (2) the right of every state to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion, and coercion; (3) non-interference in the internal affairs of one another; (4) settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means; (5) renunciation of the threat or use of force; and (6) effective co-operation among members.

The other important feature of the TAC was its provision for a High Council as spelt out in Articles 14 and 15 of the Treaty. The High Council is empowered to "recommend to the parties in dispute appropriate means of settlement, such as good offices, mediation, inquiry, or conciliation. If the disputing parties so agree, it may constitute into a committee of mediation, inquiry or conciliation". However, since 1976 this High Council has not been constituted at all and, to date, no member-state has sought recourse to any of the provisions. The only progress, as far as the constitution of the High Council is concerned, is that ASEAN is now in the final stages of drafting the Rules of Procedures for the High Council — and this after more than twenty years.

In 1999, ASEAN established the ASEAN Troika, which is an *ad hoc* body comprising the three ASEAN foreign ministers of the present, past and future chairs of the ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC), which would rotate in accordance with the ASC's chairmanship. The main purpose of the Troika is to enable ASEAN to address urgent and important political and security issues in a timely manner. However, the work of the Troika, as stipulated, must be compatible with the

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principles enshrined in the TAC, particularly the core principles of consensus and non-interference in the domestic affairs of member-states. Since its inception, nothing much has been said nor reported about its progress.

Thus, when one speaks of ASEAN's mechanisms, these would refer mainly to its informal mechanisms — oftentimes referred to as the "ASEAN Way". The ASEAN Way is translated as the observance and practice of a set of principles and norms of interstate conduct and modes of co-operation and decision-making, which has evolved and been widely practised among the ASEAN states. These norms and principles include the process of dialogue, consultation (*musyawarah*), and consensus (*muafakat*) in decision-making as opposed to majority rule; the principle of non-confrontation (also related to the principle/practice of agreeing to disagree); and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states.

While there have been other ways of describing the types of ASEAN norms besides the ones mentioned above, one ASEAN-ist has succinctly encapsulated the ASEAN Way as a feature anchored on "the belief in the wisdom of minimal institutionalization and ...on the belief that parties in a dispute are less likely to go to war as long as dialogue continues, as well as promoting reassurance that states would not be coerced into supporting a decision to which they have not consented..."[15]

A Closer Look at ASEAN's Mechanisms of Conflict Management. It appears that ASEAN's mechanisms and approaches to conflict management may seem incongruous with the types of conflicts prevalent today, particularly given the complex nature of intra-state conflicts. However, before assessing ASEAN's progress in applying these norms/mechanisms to regional conflicts, certain regional characteristics have to be examined. These few but highly important features are critical in understanding ASEAN's processes and approaches to security.

Firstly, in ASEAN's history as a corporate, inter-state organization, it has not resolved any regional conflict. All ASEAN has done thus far has been to prevent conflict. Secondly, no dispute has been brought to ASEAN as a corporate entity to resolve. Bilateral disputes are left to the parties concerned to resolve, through joint commissions or committees. Examples of these are the respective General Border Committees between Malaysia and Thailand, and Malaysia and Indonesia. These committees are tasked with resolving problems, such as border and immigration issues. Thirdly, ASEAN has no established institution within itself to handle bilateral disputes, and so far it does not want to. As mentioned above, to this day the High Council has never been invoked. Finally, it follows that since ASEAN as a body does not get involved in bilateral

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disputes among its members, it also does not get involved in the domestic problems of its member-states, nor does ASEAN attempt to resolve any intra-state problem.

Against all the self-inhibiting criteria, the question then is: how does ASEAN really manage conflicts? Perhaps if one were to apply the constructivist perspective of international relations to ASEAN's mechanisms of conflict management, one could argue that managing conflict in ASEAN is (to paraphrase Alexander Wendt) "what member states make of it and how they do it".[16] It follows too that its mechanisms of managing conflict are what "ASEAN states constitute them to be", based on their shared understanding of how disputes should be dealt with, which could then be contrary to the general notions of conflict management mechanisms. One could also ask whether it is the observance of these (ASEAN-type) mechanisms that has prevented inter-state conflicts from escalating.

The ARF and the Security of the Asia-Pacific

The ARF can be regarded as part of the proverbial building block of regional peace. Formed in 1994 under ASEAN's initiative, the ARF now has twenty-three states comprising: the ASEAN-10 (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam), ASEAN's dialogue partners (Australia, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Russia and the United States), plus Papua New Guinea, Mongolia, and North Korea.

The ARF's conflict management role has been guided by its objectives of: (1) fostering constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern; (2) undertaking efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the region; and (3) working towards strengthening and enhancing political security co-operation within the region as a means of ensuring peace and stability.

How these objectives are to be realized have been outlined within the context of a three-stage approach in conflict management, as stated in the 1995 ARF Concept Paper,[17] starting from: Stage I — the promotion of confidence-building measures (CBMs); Stage II — the development of preventive-diplomacy mechanisms; and, Stage III — the development of conflict resolution mechanisms.

Since its formation, the ARF has maintained that its focus has been on dialogue among its constituent members, and confidence-building. It disclaims notions that it is intended as a military alliance, a type of deterrence, and an alternative to a balance of power arrangement. Instead, its member-states argue that the ARF is more about attempts at

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co-operative security and fostering habits of dialogue in an inclusive forum of both like-minded and not like-minded states in the Asia-Pacific region.

At its first stage, that is, CBMs,[18] the ARF has established and broadened a region-wide security dialogue. With an initial membership of eighteen, the ARF now has twenty-three. Through its principle of inclusivity, the ARF has managed to bring together diverse actors with different political orientations. This motley gathering of actors has so far managed to sustain a multilateral security dialogue in spite of the chequered history of bilateral relations among certain members, particularly the major powers.

Since 1994 and at each subsequent ARF meeting, the ARF has broadened and enhanced political and security dialogue, as reflected in the range of topics discussed concerning Asia-Pacific security. It has, for example, facilitated discussion of sensitive issues on Myanmar, and problems on the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea. It has also included matters related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the implications of ballistic missile defence (BMD) systems, as well as called for the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and for support of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Furthermore, the ARF has and continues to address transnational security issues, especially piracy and illegal migration, including trafficking of human persons, particularly women and children, and illicit trafficking of drugs and small arms.

To push its CBM agenda forward, the ARF has had a crowded programme of inter-sessional meetings on CBMs, Search and Rescue Co-ordination, Peacekeeping Operations, and Disaster Relief. These have developed into practical and co-operative measures, which have included, among others: (1) annual defence policy statements and the increased publication of Defence White Papers that serve to reinforce transparency and openness in a region where such abstractions are not the general culture or tradition; (2) military exchanges, including staff college training; and (3) the growing involvement and participation of defence officials in the work and activities of the ARF.

Through its annual ministerial meetings, the Senior Officials Meetings (SOMs), inter-sessional activities, and the numerous Track I and Track II meetings, the ARF has created a series of networks. These networks form "social capital", a stock of trust, familiarity, and ease and comfort, which could become crucial assets at critical moments.

On its second-stage work of preventive diplomacy, the ARF has made some progress on developing the ARF "Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy" although discussions on the divergent issues regarding preventive diplomacy (PD) are still continuing.[19] At its eighth

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meeting in Hanoi, the ARF also established the ARF Register of Experts/ Eminent Persons to be used by ARF members on a voluntary basis in conflict situations;[20] and explored the principles and procedures in enhancing the role of the ARF Chairman in providing good offices and co-ordination between ARF meetings.[21] Moreover, the ARF has begun to produce the Annual Security Outlook (ASO).

The four areas mentioned above were proposals agreed upon earlier at the sixth ARF meeting in July 1999 as a means of moving the ARF agenda beyond CBMs to PD, and to address the issue of overlap between the two stages.[22] As a compromise, the final agreement was for the ARF to work on the two stages in tandem as long as the focus remained on the first stage.[23] Thus, the progress on these four areas sets the stage for pushing the PD agenda forward.

The ARF has been described as a *sui generis* organization with no established precedent. Its emphases on process-oriented approaches to security have more-or-less defined its *raison d'etre*. Thus, eight years since its establishment, the ARF has preferred to move incrementally, on the understanding shared by members that it "should not move too fast for those who want to go slow or not too slow for those who want to go fast".[24]

As with the case of ASEAN, understanding the security culture of the ARF is essential before one can proceed to assess its prospects. As one scholar has noted:

> ...structural factors play only a limited role in determining the extent and nature of both multilateral activity and multilateralism in a given regional security complex. It is the cognitive features of the environment — the attitudes of the players toward each other, the rules and norms governing international interaction, the scope and nature of the security dilemmas that the actors perpetuate among themselves — that effectively determine the particular form of regional order that results.[25]

ASEAN and the ARF's Conflict Management Scorecard

ASEAN

It can be argued that ASEAN has so far been successful in preventing bilateral conflicts and/or avoiding the escalation of bilateral disputes so as not to destabilize the region. These processes can be seen in certain case studies of bilateral disputes that have been successfully managed by ASEAN since its formation in 1967 to, at least, before the Asian financial crisis of 1997, and have lent credence to such claims. Looking back at ASEAN's formative years, several examples can be cited to support such claims, including the *Konfrontasi* period (1963), during

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the height of the conflict between Malaysia and Indonesia; the territorial dispute between Malaysia and the Philippines over the territory, Sabah (which at one point threatened the viability of ASEAN); the Indonesia–Singapore crisis in 1968, which was sparked by Singapore's execution of two Indonesian marines convicted of terrorist acts in the city-state; and the 1996 dispute between the Philippines and Singapore over the hanging of a Filipina maid convicted of murder. One could even include the successful management of the episodic crises between Singapore and Indonesia, and the ebb and flow of bilateral tensions between Malaysia and Singapore. ASEAN's "soft" approaches in managing bilateral conflicts have so far helped to defuse these crises and prevent them from escalating.

This is not to say, however, that there are no more conflicts nor tensions within ASEAN. There are. It would require more than a mere article to discuss comprehensively the dynamics of the many conflicts and issues faced by ASEAN today. Suffice it to say, however, that it has been the view of most ASEAN political leaders, bureaucrats, observers and academics that as a conflict management approach, the ASEAN Way — of minimal institutionalization, the emphases on dialogue, consultation and consensus, quiet diplomacy, a non-confrontational approach, and non-interference in domestic affairs — has served the grouping well in the past and is likely to continue to do so in the future. These soft approaches have been largely predicated on the self-restraining principles of inter-state relations, particularly the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states.

However, some critics of ASEAN take the extreme view that the ASEAN Way is nothing but rhetoric — an oxymoron, and an excuse for really doing nothing. For example, at the height of the Asian financial crisis, ASEAN was dismissed as being irrelevant and incapable of responding to urgent economic and political crises that confronted the region at that time.[26] ASEAN could not do much to mitigate the effects of the air pollution (haze) problem that originated from forest fires in Indonesia, which caused an environmental hazard enveloping many countries in Southeast Asia. Moreover, ASEAN's response to the financial crisis was widely perceived as generally inadequate in spite of the various initiatives and concrete measures it had undertaken.[27] Finally, ASEAN was deemed to have been totally ineffective in responding to a major regional security challenge — the East Timor crisis. (This will be discussed separately below.)

ASEAN Regional Forum

In so far as the ARF is concerned, its achievements can be assessed by plotting the development of its three-stage activities. The previous section has already detailed its progress in confidence-building and

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preventive diplomacy. In spite of what may be a long list of achievements, however, the ARF has in fact major shortcomings.[28] One of these is the diversity of its membership. Given the sheer expanse of the ARF's geographic footprint, not to mention the political, economic and cultural diversity that comes with it, the ARF has been hampered in its attempts to move at a more desired pace to push forward its three-stage agenda. With the diversity of interests among member-states, the task of finding convergence of interests and cohesiveness as a multilateral forum has become in itself a monumental task.

The multi-faceted nature of the ARF's diversity explains the characteristically cautious attitude of members towards any political/security initiative beyond what had been earlier agreed upon, consequently impeding the pace of progress. As a result, the ARF has often been dismissed by critics as nothing more than a talk-shop since, so far, the ARF has not been able to play a significant role in any of the conflicts in the region. In the case of the East Timor crisis, for instance, ASEAN (as a core member of the ARF) was already considered a big letdown because of its delayed response to the crisis. While ASEAN, its limited resources notwithstanding, did eventually do something, the ARF did not.

The question of approach and decision-making by consensus has also been problematic. While ASEAN's experience was relatively successful, this may not necessarily be the "Asia-Pacific way" of doing things. Specifically, the soft mechanisms developed by ASEAN are deemed insufficient to address real security problems in the Asia-Pacific, such as the tensions in the Korean Peninsula, the conflicting claims in the South China Sea, and the Taiwan issue.

Closely related to the above limitations of the ASEAN-type approach applied to the ARF is the lack of support institutions within the ARF that could set pragmatic and perhaps short-term solutions to difficult problems. Other than the annual meetings held along the sidelines of the annual ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and the Inter-sessional Groups (ISGs) and Inter-sessional Meetings (ISMs), there are no other institutions that provide support for ARF activities nor mechanisms that could drive the ARF agenda forward. Note that the ARF does not even have a Secretariat.

Another significant shortcoming is the preference of most ARF member-states for bilateralism over multilateralism. The attitude towards bilateralism and the prevailing cautious mindset of actors hamper efforts towards and support for the ARF as a fledgling multilateral endeavour.

Finally, there is the contentious issue of leadership in the ARF. The continued stewardship of ASEAN of the ARF has been noted by some observers as a disadvantage to the ARF's progress. The concerns

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lie mostly in terms of ASEAN's limited potential and capabilities to set the agenda for addressing issues such as nuclear proliferation in the Korean Peninsula and the competing claims in the South China Sea. Furthermore, ASEAN has been regarded as peripheral to some of these emerging security issues. Therefore, its advantage in being a "safe" and "acceptable" power-broker among the major players in the region may not be sustained in the medium to long term, particularly when pitched against the desire of some members who had been pushing for shared leadership/chairmanship of the ARF.[29]

The East Timor Crisis: A Test Case of Regional Mechanisms

Even before the events in East Timor in 1999 reached crisis proportions, the existing regional mechanisms to deal with political and security matters found in both ASEAN and the ARF had come in for much criticism for their ineffectiveness. Within and outside ASEAN circles, critics had argued that the ASEAN Way, which had served the grouping well in the past, was no longer adequate and was in fact becoming a serious obstacle to responding to certain conflicts. In particular, the principle of non-interference was singled out as needing re-adjustment under a much-changed external environment. The call to re-think this principle within ASEAN became more pronounced when former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anwar Ibrahim mooted the idea of "constructive involvement" in 1997 in reaction to the events in Cambodia that year.[30] During that period, Cambodia's formal entry into ASEAN was delayed because of domestic conflict brought about by the ousting of Prince Ranariddh as First Prime Minister of Cambodia by Hun Sen, who was then Second Prime Minister. Those events threw the country into turmoil and undermined the Paris Peace Agreement of 1992, which had defined the framework for peace and stability in Cambodia.

This idea was followed by the broad proposal from then Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan in 1998 to consider some flexibility in the practice of non-intervention, and thus the emergence of the term "flexible engagement".[31] However, the formal debate on the notion of flexible engagement stopped at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in July 1998 when ASEAN announced that it would instead practice "enhanced interaction". This new lexicon apparently meant that ASEAN could have more open exchanges on issues which have cross-border effects, such as the air pollution (haze) problem that was plaguing Southeast Asia at that time, but still respecting the principle of non-interference.[32] In spite of the regional consensus to practise "enhanced interaction", the events in East Timor in 1999 found ASEAN and the ARF under criticism for their inability to stem the violence and gross violations of

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human rights in the former Portuguese colony. In this case, while ASEAN did do something, albeit limited, the ARF in contrast was nowhere on the scene.

With Indonesia's decision to allow East Timor to have a referendum on 30 August 1999 on its future status — to be either an autonomous province of Indonesia or an independent state — violence erupted. During this period, the UN Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) had been established to help prepare East Timor for the referendum. UNAMET comprised 241 international staff, 420 UN volunteers, up to 280 civilian police, and some 4,000 local staff. Within ASEAN, the Philippines contributed to UNAMET by sending civilian police, staff members, and electoral volunteers.[33]

In spite of the presence of UNAMET, violence escalated and spread throughout East Timor, leading to a declaration of martial law on 7 September. By then, many lives had been lost and destruction of property was evident everywhere. Thousands of terrified East Timorese were forcibly displaced to West Timor by pro-Indonesian militias. The International Commission of Inquiry on East Timor, released by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Indonesian Government's report on the Inquiry into Human Rights Abuses drew similar conclusions that the atrocities were committed by the local militia, and that the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) were complicit.[34]

Many governments, either individually or collectively through the UN, urged Indonesia to enforce law and order in East Timor. While there were indeed expressions of concern eliciting from the ASEAN countries, it took the Australian initiative to offer a large contingent of troops for a UN peacekeeping force before any international action could begin to stop the violence in East Timor. Even then, it was not until Indonesia consented to an international peacekeeping force in East Timor that ASEAN officials began to discuss their countries' possible participation in the force. Incidentally, discussions took place on the sidelines of the APEC Summit in Auckland and, prior to that, no *ad hoc* ASEAN meeting was convened to address what was at that time a spiralling humanitarian crisis in Southeast Asia.

On 15 September 1999, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1264 creating the International Force East Timor (INTERFET) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Australia headed the multinational force, and within ASEAN, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand contributed troops. A large part of the ASEAN contribution to INTERFET comprised support, medical, and engineering personnel. INTERFET allowed the United Nations to begin large-scale humanitarian relief operations in East Timor. Apart from providing basic relief to the

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East Timorese, INTERFET repaired damaged infrastructure, ran medical clinics and most importantly, established security throughout the war-torn territory.

By 25 October, the UN Security Council had passed Resolution 1272 to authorize UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to set up the UN Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) in order to "exercise all legislative and executive authority including the administration of justice" in East Timor until formal independence. UNTAET's mandate was to provide security and maintain law and order throughout the territory of East Timor; to establish an effective administration; to assist in the development of civil and social services; to ensure the co-ordination and distribution of humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development assistance; to support capacity-building for self-government; and to assist in the establishment of conditions for sustainable economic development.[35] UNTAET formally replaced INTERFET in February 2000, and a Filipino military officer, Lieutenant-General Jaime de los Santos became the head of the UN peacekeeping force, replacing INTERFET's Major-General Peter Cosgrove from Australia.

The crisis in East Timor offers insights into the existing regional mechanisms of conflict management in Asia. The crisis showed that ASEAN and the ARF's mechanisms were inadequate to respond to an unfolding humanitarian disaster in their midst. To be sure, ASEAN failed to respond to the crisis as a group and whatever individual responses that came were muted and sensitive to the issue of Indonesia's national sovereignty. It is noteworthy that at the height of the violence in East Timor, members of ASEAN were reported to have hedged on the issue of discussing the possibility of international action before securing Indonesia's consent.

ASEAN's lack of leadership in East Timor was in sharp contrast to the pro-active role it had assumed in the search for a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian conflict from 1979 to 1991. From the start of the Cambodian imbroglio, ASEAN was at the forefront in efforts to resolve it. Throughout the conflict, whatever ASEAN lacked in terms of political authority to influence the behaviour of the warring factions and the major power dynamics, it was compensated by its intense lobbying efforts at the United Nations and in facilitating dialogue between the warring parties; these culminated in the famous Jakarta Informal Meetings (JIM I and JIM II). While it could be argued that ASEAN's swift reaction was predicated on its protest against Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia, which violated international norms of respect for a country's sovereignty and the right of self-determination (principles also found in ASEAN's own TAC) compared with the internal dimension

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of the East Timor conflict, the latter also presented a strong case of the gross violation of international norms.

ASEAN officials have responded to the criticisms by declaring that only the UN has the legitimacy and the capabilities to undertake any peacekeeping operation and mobilize the requisite resources necessary to respond to a crisis such as that in East Timor. What ASEAN had done instead was to "undertake consultations, arrived at [a] consensus, and let individual members decide on what specific contributions to make to the UN effort".[36] Although these were consistent with its processes and mechanisms of conflict management, ASEAN's actions against expectations reflected the stark reality that the nature of regional mechanisms are such that they are largely predicated on the availability of resources, or lack thereof. It should be noted too that the East Timor crisis happened at a time when most ASEAN states were still recovering from the devastating effects of the Asian financial crisis. Thus, most countries were preoccupied with national concerns and could offer no more than a limited contribution.

The East Timor crisis also highlighted ASEAN's sensitivity to the issue of national sovereignty when it came to setting up an international inquiry into the atrocities there. ASEAN member-states demonstrated their strict adherence to the principle of non-interference by opposing such a resolution that was sponsored by the European Union. This reservation was suggestive of fear by some ASEAN countries that a similar kind of international response could be directed against them if and when the international community considered it justifiable to undertake humanitarian intervention.[37]

Finally, an important repercussion of the lack of action in East Timor was the further weakening of ASEAN's value as a regional actor in the promotion of regional political and security co-operation. This was in stark contrast to ASEAN's pro-active role during the Cambodian crisis.

ASEAN, the ARF, and the United Nations:

Prospects of Task-Sharing Arrangements for Peace

The preceding discussion provided a mixed picture of the effectiveness and limitations of regional mechanisms of conflict management as found in ASEAN and the ARF. So far, it has been argued that in spite of its limitations, ASEAN has achieved limited success in managing inter-state conflicts. The same, however, cannot yet be said for the ARF, for the very reason that it still has to demonstrate its ability to handle regional disputes.

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Nevertheless, defining the nature of these achievements may be contentious and would largely depend on the kinds of benchmark used to measure success. The argument here is that while the soft and informal nature of regional mechanisms may be ineffective and irrelevant to conflicts such as the East Timor crisis that would require decisive action and intervention, those mechanisms have proven their usefulness in managing inter-state relations, specifically in preventing conflict between states. It is these achievements that can provide the foundation in exploring possibilities for co-operation between the UN and both ASEAN and the ARF.

For a start, these regional mechanisms have built up a solid capital of goodwill and peaceful inter-state relations in the region, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels. As far as existing institutions are concerned, both ASEAN and the ARF have also generated a number of other institutions, albeit loose and informally structured. Nonetheless, this reservoir of extensive networks at the Track I, Track II and even Track III levels, reinforced by institutionalized habits of dialogue, reflect the large number of meetings and socialization that take place in the Asia-Pacific region, and the extensive political, economic, and security co-operation that occurs within ASEAN and the ARF.

Thus, one of the first things that have to be addressed to promote closer co-operation is strengthening the existing dialogue mechanisms between ASEAN/ARF and the UN, and the creation of new ones. It is ironic that with the numerous dialogue mechanisms that have been created, ASEAN is the only major regional organization without observer status at the UN. In fact, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, at the ASEAN-UN Summit in Bangkok in February 2000, lamented the fact that both ASEAN and the UN "have found little to say to each other on peace and security at the time when new forms of security challenges are presenting themselves".[38] Much can be gained by exchanging information and the sharing of experiences between the UN and ASEAN. As far as the ARF is concerned, it has already initiated contacts with the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). More can be done by both ASEAN and the ARF. The two regional groupings could, for example, institutionalize regular meetings or courtesy calls on the UN Secretary-General. In turn, the Secretary-General and members of his staff may be invited to participate in the annual ARF Ministerial Meeting and, to the extent practicable, to the important ISG Meetings and other Track I and Track II activities, especially when the issues are of importance to the UN's work in conflict prevention.

With regard to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, experience has shown that the ASEAN and ARF countries have the potential to

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contribute more to UN operations, regardless of some obvious limitations. Although ASEAN and the ARF have a long way to go before adopting something similar to NATO-type mechanisms, ASEAN could offer itself to undertake some preventive action tasks, such as conducting fact-finding missions. This task also suits the ARF, which has established the ARF Register of Experts/Eminent Persons (EEPs) and is currently discussing the enhanced role of the ARF Chairman. The EEPs, for example, could provide professional advice and conduct in-depth studies on regional security issues. They can also serve as resource persons in the various ARF meetings on issues within their expertise. The Brahimi Report on UN Peace Operations[39] has emphasized the contribution of regional expertise, and thus the ARF's Register of Experts/Eminent Persons, and even those from Track II and non-governmental organizations, should be made available to the UN. ASEAN and the ARF already have a pool of experts who can offer valuable contributions to regional peace. Their work on confidence-building and preventive diplomacy can strengthen the UN's early warning and conflict prevention capacities.

Conclusion

The UN Secretary-General in his Millenium Report placed significant emphasis on the key concept of prevention in the maintenance of international peace and security.[40] This type of conflict management work is where ASEAN and the ARF can best complement. The types of conflict mechanisms and processes which ASEAN and the ARF have generated over the years in avoiding conflicts, and more importantly, in norm-building, would be useful in this objective of conflict prevention.

ASEAN and the ARF have realistically crafted their roles in a regional environment where the dynamics of conflicts are complex. Therefore, the preparedness and willingness of ASEAN and the ARF to work with the UN offer prospects for co-operative, task-sharing arrangements among these international institutions. As each institution sets about its respective tasks of securing and maintaining stability, the major challenge is to bridge the efforts by the UN, ASEAN, and the ARF and link these "islands of peace" to create collaborative work in the service of international peace and security.

NOTES

1. For more detailed discussion, see David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan, "The New Regionalism in Security Affairs", *Regional Order: Building Security in a New*

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2. S. Neil MacFarlane and Thomas G. Weiss, "Regional Organizations and Regional Security", *Security Studies* (Autumn 1992): 6–37.
3. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping* (New York: United Nations, 1992).
4. See Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.
5. Joseph Nye, *Peace in Parts* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), Chapter 5.
6. Michael Barnett, "Partners in Peace? The UN, Regional Organisations and Peacekeeping", *Review of International Studies* 21 (1995): 411–33.
7. MacFarlane and Weiss, op. cit., p. 11. See also Muthiah Alagappa, "Regionalism and Conflict Management: A Framework of Analysis", *Review of International Studies* 21 (1995): 359–97.
8. To the extent possible, the following discussions will look at the mechanisms of conflict management in both ASEAN and the ARF, although the former may take up a larger part of the analyses by virtue of the fact that ASEAN has been around much longer than the ARF.
9. See, for example, Michael Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 1989); and Tim Huxley, "ASEAN's Role in the Emerging East Asian Regional Security Architecture", *Fragmented Asia: Regional Integration and National Disintegration in Pacific Asia*, edited by Ian G. Cook, et al. (Aldershot, England: Avebury, 1996).
10. There are many works that discuss the earlier attempts to form a sub-regional organization in Southeast Asia within the context of ASEAN. See, for example, Estrella Solidum, *Towards a Southeast Asian Community* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1974); Arfinn Jorgensen-Dahl, *Regional Organization and Order in Southeast Asia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982); Michael Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 1989); and Michael Antolik, *ASEAN and the Diplomacy of Accommodation* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc. 1990).
11. Leifer, op. cit., p. 150.
12. C.R. Mitchell, *The Structure of International Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), Chapters 1 & 4.
13. For a more detailed discussion on the various types of conflict management mechanisms, see, for example, Muthiah Alagappa, "Regional Institutions, the UN and International Security", *Third World Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (1997): 421–41.
14. For a more detailed discussion on these informal mechanisms, see Mely C. Anthony, "Mechanisms of Dispute Settlement: The ASEAN Experience", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 20, no. 1 (April 1999): 38–66.
15. Carolina G. Hernandez, "ASEAN 10: Meeting the Challenges", *Beyond the Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities*, Vol. 1, edited by Mely Anthony and Mohamed Jawhar Hassan (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies, 2000), p. 241.
16. Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of It", *International Organisation* 46 (1992): 396–421.
17. *The ASEAN Regional Forum: A Concept Paper* (Bandar Seri Begawan, 1 August 1995).
18. For an excellent summary on CBMs that have already been implemented by the ARF, see Alan Dupont, "The Future of the ARF: An Australian Perspective", *Future of the ARF*, edited by Khoo How San (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 1999).

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19. Chairman's Statement, Eighth Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, Hanoi, 25 July 2001.
20. Chairman's Statement, Seventh Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, Bangkok, 24 July 2000.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Chairman's Statement, Fourth Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, Kuala Lumpur, 27 July 1997.
24. Ibid.
25. Brian Job, "Matters of Multilateralism: Implications for Regional Conflict Management", in *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World,* edited by David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p. 176.
26. See, for example, Jeannie Henderson, *Reassessing ASEAN,* Adelphi Paper 323 (London: Oxford University Press for IISS, 1999).
27. There have been numerous accounts on ASEAN's response to the currency crisis. See, for example, Hadi Soesastro, "ASEAN during the Crisis", *ASEAN Economic Bulletin* 15, no. 3 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, December 1998); John Funston, "ASEAN: Out of its Depths", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 20, no. 3 (April 1998); and Michael Wesley, "The Asian Crisis and the Adequacy of Regional Institutions", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 21, no. 1 (April 1999).
28. For a more recent and comprehensive review of the ARF, see Tan See Seng, Ralf Emmers, Mely C. Anthony, Amitav Acharya, Barry Desker, and Kwa Chong Guan, *A New Agenda for the ASEAN Regional Forum,* IDSS Monograph No. 4 (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2002).
29. This point, among others, have been extensively addressed in *A New Agenda for the ASEAN Regional Forum.*
30. Anwar Ibrahim's interview with *Time* magazine in 1997.
31. "Thailand to pursue Constructive Intervention Policy", *New Straits Times,* 3 June 1998.
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33. Cited in Carolina G. Hernandez, "The East Timor Crisis: Regional Mechanisms on Trial and Implications for Regional Political and Security Cooperation" (Paper delivered at the ARF Professional Development Programme, Bandar Seri Begawan, 23–28 April 2000).
34. For a detailed discussion on the violence in East Timor, see Ian Martin, *Self Determination in East Timor,* International Peace Academy Occasional Paper Series (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Reinner Publishers, Inc., 2001). See also Leonard C. Sebastian and Anthony L. Smith, "The East Timor Crisis: A Test Case for Humanitarian Intervention", *Southeast Asian Affairs 2000* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000).
35. "The United Nations and East Timor" (http://www.un.org/peace/etimor/UntaetB.htm).
36. "Sovereignty, Intervention and the ASEAN Way" (Address by ASEAN Secretary General Rodolfo Severino at the ASEAN Scholars' Roundtable, Singapore, 3 July 2000).
37. Carolina G. Hernandez, "The East Timor Crisis: Regional Mechanisms on Trial and Implications for Regional Political and Security Cooperation" (Paper delivered at the ARF Professional Development Programme, Bandar Seri Begawan, 23–28 April 2000).

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38. "Strengthening ASEAN-United Nations Partnership" (Remarks by Secretary-General of the United Nations at the ASEAN-UN Summit, Bangkok, 12 February 2000).
39. See Report on the Panel on UN Peace Operations, 21 August 2002; also available online at http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/report.htm.
40. "*The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century: The Millenium Report*" (Department of Information: United Nations, 2000), pp. 44–46.

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China's Expanding Maritime Ambitions in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean

LEE JAE-HYUNG

This article concentrates on China's apparent intention to expand its maritime influence into the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, China's fear of a major land war has been diminished. Instead, China's leaders have realized the role of naval power in the promotion of China's economic interests, diplomatic ascension, and national prestige. China faces overlapping claims in the Spratly and Diaoyutai (Senkaku) Islands with neighbouring countries, and Beijing has recognized the importance of sea-lines of communication from the Persian Gulf to China, as it became a net oil importer since 1993. This strategic environment has made China modernize its naval forces and expand maritime diplomacy around the globe. Moreover, China intends to become a peer competitor to the United States. How effectively the United States and regional countries handle China's naval ambitions will have consequences for overall security in the Asia-Pacific.

Introduction

Chinese leaders have long aspired to a great China, a country with a world-class economy and military, and with the restoration of full sovereignty over Taiwan and other disputed islands within its claimed territorial boundaries. After the end of the Cold War, the Chinese leadership began to realize the importance of a navy in accomplishing their grand strategy. In the post-Deng era, Jiang Zemin and high-ranking military officers have been more assertive about Chinese naval

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modernization through the acquisition of sophisticated weapons and equipment and the development of a blue-water naval strategy. To implement Jiang's new military doctrine, Admiral Shi Yunsheng, Commander of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has noted that China's twenty-first century navy has to develop in the following fashion: first, an offshore defence strategy; secondly, a strong navy with science and technology; thirdly, more advanced weapon systems; and fourthly, well-trained personnel and more qualified people.[1]

Admiral Shi's blue-print for the development of the PLAN seems to focus on Jiang's doctrine to achieve China's national objectives of the unification of Taiwan, the control of the South China Sea, and the expansion of maritime influence over the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Any attempt to invade Taiwan by the People's Republic of China (PRC) would invite U.S. naval intervention. Likewise, island disputes in the South China Sea, and the exploration of offshore resources in those areas are confronted with other claimants' responses, including that of Vietnam and the Philippines. China also has to safeguard sea-lanes for its increasing oil imports. More significantly, China attempts to become a great sea-power to compete with America's hegemonic position in the world's oceans. These strategic issues have prodded China to expand its maritime influence in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

China's Naval Surge and Its Threat Perception

China's naval ambitions are not only concerned with neighbouring seas, but also extend farther afield. China is working to expand its strategic depth to more remote regions around Australia, South Africa and the United States to emphasize its position as a world power.[2] China has actively conducted port calls around the world to demonstrate a higher naval profile. In 2001, PLAN vessels conducted a range of visits around the globe, sailing to some twenty-three countries in Asia, America, Africa, Europe, and Oceania.[3] During the period between May and September 2002, the Chinese navy conducted an around-the-world cruise with a guided missile destroyer and a support ship, calling into ports in a dozen countries, including the United States, Russia, Portugal, and Brazil.[4] Such naval diplomacy is intended to promote mutual understanding, as well as to indicate to the countries visited that China's naval interests are growing on a global scale.

China also conducted a number of expeditions to the Antarctic and the Arctic. It began its Antarctic expeditions in 1984, and Arctic expeditions in 1999, through which PLAN units engaged in such operations as oceanographic surveys and sea-bottom research for the

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purposes of increasing the PLAN's anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capabilities.[5] China's attention to the world's greatest canals became obvious in the late 1990s. In 1997, the Hong Kong-based Hutchison-Whampoa Company purchased the rights to port facilities on both the Pacific and Atlantic terminals of the Panama Canal.[6] In addition, the Chinese Government has finalized an agreement with Egypt, allowing ships of the China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO) to use port facilities along the Suez Canal.[7] All these developments demonstrate how China has actively expanded its maritime influence in the world's oceans.

To implement its maritime expansion, China has been modernizing its naval assets. The PLAN commissioned the first of its Song-class submarines in the late 1990s. The Song-class submarine is fitted with the C-801 and C-802 anti-ship cruise missiles, which are capable of submerged launch.[8] In addition to domestic procurement, the Chinese navy has imported sophisticated technologies from Russia, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Israel. The PLAN has acquired Russian-made Raduga SS-N-22 anti-ship missiles, which have been retrofitted onto the two Sovremenny-class destroyers which China bought from Russia. Each Sovremenny-class destroyer carries up to forty-four thirty-mile-range SA-N-17 anti-aircraft missiles, one Kamov KA-27 anti-submarine helicopter, extensive electronic warfare systems, and 130mm guns. These destroyers, when added to four modern Kilo-class attack submarines, would pose some degree of threat to U.S. and Taiwanese naval vessels in the Western Pacific. After the acquisition of the Sovremenny-class destroyers, U.S. officials expressed some concern. The *Washington Times* reported:

> U.S. Defence Department officials said that Russia recently delivered the first shipment of 24 SSN-22 anti-ship supersonic cruise missiles to China for the Sovremenny-class destroyer. U.S. Representative Dana Rohrabacher, California Republican, stated, "The Chinese communists now have the ability to sink American aircraft carriers and kill thousands of Americans." .... Richer Fisher, a specialist on the Chinese military in the Jamestown Foundation, said that, "Taiwan has no defensive system that can take out this missile besides a pre-emptive attack on the destroyer itself, which increases instability in the Taiwan Strait."[9]

China's desire to possess an aircraft carrier has been one of the most significant issues among Chinese leaders. China's "708 Institute" first began feasibility studies on an aircraft carrier design in a 600-metre model pool in the early 1980s in Tai Lake, Jiangsu province.[10] In 1985, China purchased the retired aircraft carrier *Melbourne* from Australia, and studied its design features. In November 1990, a model of China's

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first-generation carrier was displayed in Beijing. The carrier was designed to have a displacement of 40,000–50,000 tonnes, and twenty fixed-wing aircraft on deck and another twenty in its hangar.[11] China's aircraft carrier acquisition effort has, in the past few years, been furthered through the purchase of a number of decommissioned carriers from abroad. In March 1998, a Macao company bought an unfinished carrier *Varyag* from Ukraine in an attempt to turn it into a floating amusement park.[12] In August 2000, Tianma Shipbreaking of Tianjin paid the Russian navy US$8.4 million for the decommissioned *Kiev* for scrap.[13] In September 2000, China bought the carrier *Minsk* from South Korea for US$5 million.

With regard to the Chinese aircraft carrier programme, Korean analyst Chung-in Moon has stated that China is building a blue-water navy with plans to equip its fleet with a carrier by the early twenty-first century.[14] Richard Fisher has pointed out that China could build a 48,000-ton carrier with up to forty fixed-wing aircraft by 2005.[15] The Taiwan Security Research Institute has also reported that China's first locally built aircraft carrier of 48,000 tons, equipped with twenty-four fighter aircraft, will be in full service in 2005, and it plans to invest US$585 million to build its own carrier.[16] Most strategic studies experts predict that China will possess an aircraft carrier within a decade, by either buying one from a foreign source, or building it domestically.[17] An aircraft carrier will enhance the force projection capabilities of the PLAN. More significantly, it would then be better placed to challenge American naval predominance in East Asian waters. Although China is still a relatively poor country on a per capita income basis, it has immense potential in being able to concentrate its resources and abilities into the forms of military strength necessary to become a major maritime power.[18]

China's maritime ambitions appear to be similar to that of the Pax Americana which underpins America's global primacy.[19] In the long run, China seems to aspire to have a blue-water naval capability so as to exercise some control over the South China Sea, and to safeguard the sea-lanes from the Middle East to Chinese ports.

China's Maritime Ambitions in the Indian Ocean Region

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the withdrawal of fleet units of the United States and the USSR from the Philippines and Vietnam respectively, China has been expanding its sphere of influence into the Indian Ocean region as an initial stage of a broader scheme of involvement throughout the Asian region. China's fast-growing economy has increased significantly its patterns of oil consumption, thus making

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it a net oil importer since 1993. In 1996, China's net oil imports were 0.21 million barrels of oil per day (bbl/d),[20] but by 2000 China had become the third biggest oil consumer in the world, amounting to 4.6 million bbl/d, with its net oil imports reaching 1.4 million bbl/d (see Table 1).[21]

According to recent estimates, China's oil imports are expected to rise from 1.4 million bbl/d in 2000 to three million bbl/d by 2010.[22] Consequently, the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Hormuz could emerge as crucial waterways for China's maritime interests. China believes that through close co-operation with Myanmar, Pakistan, and Iran, it could guarantee the security of sea-lines of communication (SLOCs) in Southeast Asian seas and the Indian Ocean. China's leadership believes that a strategic alliance with these nations is beneficial to counter U.S. hegemony in the region. The plan aims not only at China's future economic interest in the region but also at the monitoring of Indian and U.S. naval activities in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal.[23] To effectively introduce a scheme of maritime expansion into the Indian Ocean region, China has been maintaining strategic partnerships with Myanmar, Pakistan, and Iran.

Myanmar

The Chinese believe that Myanmar could help provide their country with access to the Indian Ocean through the Malacca Strait. The Myanmar military regime, which faced international isolation and pressure following the suppression of the 1988 democratic movement

TABLE 1
Top Ten Net Oil Importers in 2000 (million barrels per day)

Rank	*Country*	*Consumption*	*Production*	*Net Imports*
1	United States	19.5	9.0	9.8
2	Japan	5.6	0.1	5.6
3	Germany	2.8	0.1	2.7
4	South Korea	2.1	0.1	2.0
5	France	2.0	0.1	2.0
6	Italy	2.0	0.1	1.8
7	Spain	1.5	0.0	1.5
8	India	1.8	0.7	1.1
9	China	4.6	3.2	1.4
10	Taiwan	0.8	0.0	0.8

NOTE: Production includes crude oil, lease condensate, natural gas liquids, other hydrocarbons and alcohol, and refinery gain.
SOURCE: US Energy Information Administration, *Top Ten Net Oil Importers*, 2000.

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in the country, has developed close military and diplomatic ties with Beijing.[24] Since then, China has supplied about US$1.2 billion worth of weapons and other military equipment to Myanmar.[25] In return, China has secured a profitable market for its huge defence industry and probably access to intelligence on movements through the congested shipping lanes from the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Malacca.[26] Between 1991 and 1992, China began to support Myanmar's naval modernization programme by providing six Hainan-class fast attack craft, and by supporting the construction of naval facilities on the Hainggyik and Great Coco Islands. These islands are located at a geographically important point in the shipping lanes between the Bay of Bengal and the Strait of Malacca. The waterway could become an important passage for commercial goods, weapons, and equipment from China to Myanmar and other Chinese allies. Moreover, if China secured a naval base in Myanmar, the Irrawady River waterway could provide China with necessary supplies for its naval force. As Bertil Lintner has noted:

> China has already taken several steps towards establishing a trade route through Myanmar to give its Yunnan province an outlet to the Indian Ocean, which neighbouring states fear that the Myanmar connection might contribute not just for trade but also for Beijing to play a significant naval role in the Indian Ocean.[27]

China's upgrading of Myanmar's naval bases on the Mergui and Coco Islands caused concerns to India and Japan: India's concern relates to Coco Island, which is an outlet to the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea and where the Indian Navy had hitherto held sway; and Japan's concern relates to Mergui Island as an entrance to the Malacca Strait which Japan considers to be a lifeline for its economy.[28] China is also interested in naval facilities at Bassein (an island in the Irrawady River delta), which might spark-off Sino-Indian naval rivalry and constitute a negative development for ASEAN security.[29]

If China were to establish a naval base in Myanmar, what would the implications be? From India's point of view, the Beijing–Yangon alliance enables China to squeeze India between China's two allies, Myanmar and Pakistan, and effectively check India's naval activities in the Indian Ocean.[30] Myanmar's geostrategic location is also important to the United States. Washington has imposed sanctions against Yangon since 1988; thus, Beijing's support to Yangon's military junta is a cause of concern to the United States. More importantly, Beijing–Yangon naval ties pose a potential threat to U.S. naval strategy in the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean. If China were to have a naval base in Myanmar, Washington would reconsider its military presence in regional countries.

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Pakistan

Since the 1964 Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, China has sided with Pakistan. China supports Pakistan for geostrategic reasons, as Pakistan is considered India's most troublesome adversary.[31] Since India's 1975 nuclear test, Pakistan has been eager to acquire nuclear technology for its national survival. Although much of the needed material for nuclear weapons development has come from the West (including Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Canada, and the United States), China has been a primary supplier for Pakistan's nuclear project.[32] In 1986, China concluded a comprehensive nuclear co-operation agreement with Pakistan. Although Beijing signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1992, it violated the arms control regime by providing Pakistan with nuclear technology.[33] In the mid-1990s, the U.S. Government provided China with advanced technologies, such as super-computers, satellites, and other technology, expecting China to respond by not supplying nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons to what the U.S. regards as "rogue states".[34] However, between 1994 and 1995, China transferred nuclear-related supplies to Pakistan, including 5,000 ring magnets for uranium enrichment, and in 1996 Pakistan imported a specialised nuclear material-related furnace from China.[35] Finally, in tests carried out on 28 and 30 May 1998, Pakistan detonated several nuclear devices.[36] It is likely that Pakistan will continue to enhance its nuclear development posture to counter India's nuclear initiatives.

When it comes to the missile issue, Pakistan's perception of its vulnerability is quite significant. Most of Pakistan's major economic and population centres lie in a band between 50 and 250 kilometres from the Indian border, while India has much greater strategic depth with its key western cities of New Delhi and Mumbai being over 350 km and 600 km respectively from Pakistan's nearest border.[37] This is one of the reasons why Pakistan feels the need for longer-range missiles than India. As for missile systems, China helped Pakistan build the Hatf I and Hatf II missiles in the mid-1990s.[38] The M-11 (CSS-7) missile was first test-fired by China in 1990, and it transferred M-11 missiles to Pakistan in 1991.[39] The missile deal led to a dispute between China and the United States because the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) bans the export of missiles exceeding a throw-weight of 500 kg and a range of 300 km. China has insisted that the M-11 has a range of just under 300 km, but some U.S. experts estimate that the M-11 exceeds the guidelines of the MTCR.

Will China continue to provide Pakistan with missile and nuclear technologies in the future? China's missile and nuclear deals with Pakistan will likely continue as long as Sino-Indian rivalry exists. As Jane's Intelligence Group has reported, at least ten Chinese missile

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experts are assisting with technical advice to Pakistani researchers at a medium-range missile factory in Fatehgarh near Islamabad.[40] China and Pakistan believe that a strategic partnership on arms deals between the two countries is very important for their national interests. From China's point of view, Pakistan is an important ally in the Indian Ocean for the purposes of achieving China's goal of developing a sphere of influence in the Indian Ocean. At the same time, Pakistan regards China as one of its most important strategic partners in its own efforts to cope with threats from India. Chinese leaders think that through close naval co-operation with Pakistan, they can expand maritime influence towards the Arabian Sea, and thereby check Indian naval activities in the Indian Ocean. Ehsan Ahrari has reported the recent development of the Sino-Pakistani naval partnership as follows:

> China has increased its naval presence in Pakistan and is building a deepwater port in the Pakistani coastal city Gwadar at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. A less-publicised aspect of this development is that Pakistan has granted docking permission to Chinese naval vessels, thereby giving China a permanent presence in the Indian Ocean. .... The activities of the Chinese and Pakistani navies have intensified India's own "look east" policy, whereby its navy is interested in nurturing naval cooperation with Vietnam and Burma.[41]

During America's war with the Taliban in Afghanistan, Pakistan seemed to lean more towards the United States than China. However, Pakistan returned to China's umbrella of support after realizing that it was not receiving promised aid from Washington in return for its support for the U.S. in its "war on terrorism".[42]

Iran

Iran seeks to enhance its political and military influence over the Middle East and to reduce interference from foreign powers, especially the United States, in the Persian Gulf region. According to a report, Iran is developing three security policy objectives.[43] The first is to form an alliance with India, China, and Russia to cope with any threat from the United States. The second is to deter its rival, Iraq. The third is to secure the Strait of Hormuz, which the Iranians regard as a strategic chokepoint. To meet these national objectives, Iran has been enhancing its military capabilities. The United States views Iran with particular concern, deeming it a sponsor of international terrorism, a threat to U.S. security interests in the region as well as a threat to U.S. friends and allies, especially Israel.[44]

On the other hand, Beijing believes that its co-operation with Iran could bring benefits not only for its national interests in the Gulf, but also for its internal stability. China anticipates that its close ties with

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Iran would guarantee its growing requirement for oil from the Middle East, and help to restrain radical Islam in China's western provinces.[45] China wants good relations with Iran for other reasons: Iran is viewed as a potential counterbalance to U.S. influence in the Persian Gulf; and China also views Iran as a market for its military hardware.[46] The Chinese arms trade with Iran has since the early 1980s involved thousands of tanks, armoured personnel carriers, and artillery pieces, as well as thousands of anti-tank missiles, more than a hundred fighter aircraft, and small warships.[47] China sold a number of Houdong fast patrol boats to Iran in 1996. The patrol boats, equipped with C-802 anti-ship cruise missiles, could pose a threat to U.S. ships in the region.[48]

Since 1985, China has also provided Iran with nuclear-related technology, selling several nuclear reactors and helping to construct a safeguard uranium hexafluoride plant.[49] During the Iran–Iraq war, China's most controversial arms transfers to Iran consisted of Silkworm (HY-2) anti-ship missiles, which hit an American-owned tanker and a Kuwaiti tanker in May 1987.[50] Chinese companies are also supporting Iran's efforts to produce M-9, M-11, and M-18 missiles.[51] Iran's growing missile capabilities have been one of America's issues of concern in the Gulf. When Iran launched a missile with an 800-mile range in July 1998, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimated that Iran would be able to target Israel in a decade or so.[52] Iran, with China's continuous support, will likely pursue a leading position in the Middle East by developing nuclear weapons, missiles, and chemical and biological weapons.[53] For Beijing, a strong Iran helps enable China's efforts to secure needed oil and to expand its maritime influence in the Hormuz Strait.

China's Interest in the Southeast Asian Sea-lines of Communication

The major SLOCs in the Southeast Asian maritime region include the South China Sea, the Straits of Malacca and Singapore and other regional straits, namely, the Sunda, Lombok-Makassar, and Ombai-Wetar. The South China Sea and Southeast Asian straits are significant because they are important waterways for every user nation in the conduct of foreign trade. More than half of the world's merchant shipping passed through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, Sunda and Lombok in 1993, and over one-third of the world's fleet tonnage visited these straits during the same period.[54] The sea-lanes also provide the U.S. Navy with a transit passageway for its force projection in the event of a crisis in the Gulf or elsewhere. Of these, the South China Sea and the Straits of Malacca and Singapore remain crucial for the U.S. and East Asian countries. During the Cold War, the United States was largely

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predominant in these waterways. In the post-Cold War world, however, China's naval ambitions to the regional sea-lanes are looming large.

The South China Sea

The South China Sea — known in Chinese as Nan Hai, or the South Sea — is part of the Western Pacific, and is bounded on the northeast by the Taiwan Strait, on the east by Taiwan and the Philippines, on the southeast and south by Borneo, the southern limit of the Gulf of Thailand, and the east coast of the Malay peninsula, and on the west and north by the Asian mainland.[55] In this body of water lie the Spratly Islands, the Paracel Islands, the Pratas Islands, Macclesfield Bank, and Scarborough Reef.[56] The dispute concerning sovereignty over the Spratly and Paracel Islands, as well as adjacent sea-space, has been a thorny issue between China and other claimants, and has triggered several military clashes during the past two decades (see Table 2).

In the early 1990s, Indonesia voluntarily mediated to resolve the Spratly issue, but it gave up because China's claims seemed to extend to Indonesia's exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and continental shelf, including the Natuna gas fields.[57] China's claims annoyed Indonesian leaders, and they subsequently protested what they considered China's assertiveness. Since then, Indonesia has ceased to arbitrate on the Spratly issue. Australian analyst Greg Austin has suggested three likely mechanisms to a resolution of the Spratly issue: judicial arbitration, to which all parties agree; long-term abandonment of sovereignty claims in favour of a multilateral co-operative regime; or use of force to expel rival claimants.[58] Given its past courses of action towards many island disputes, it seems likely that China will eventually resort to force against its opponents on a piecemeal basis.

While asserting claims to the Paracel and Spratly Islands, China is very cautious not to allow its relations with the ASEAN states to deteriorate. In April 1997, China expressed its willingness to discuss the Spratly issue multilaterally (as ASEAN has long demanded) rather than on a one-to-one basis.[59] However, it is unlikely that China is ready to negotiate the South China Sea dispute with relevant claimants multilaterally. Susan Willet elaborates on this point:

> Beijing is reticent about a multilateral security framework for two main reasons: as a large state, China would prefer to negotiate one-to-one with its invariably smaller neighbours over disputes such as the ownership of the Spratly Islands rather than allowing them to gang up on China in a collective forum; China fears that internal matters — the Taiwan question, Chinese military modernization, or China's lack of military transparency — might be placed on the agenda of a

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TABLE 2
Military Clashes in the South China Sea

Countries	*Military Clashes*
China and Vietnam	1. China seized the Paracel Islands (1974). 2. Navies of both countries clashed in Johnson Reef in the Spratlys (1988). 3. Vietnam accused China of landing troops on Da Luc Reef, and China seized 20 Vietnamese ships transporting goods from Hong Kong (1992). 4. Both countries clashed in their oil exploration blocks (1994).
China and Philippines	1. China occupied Philippine-claimed Mischief Reef (1995). 2. Both nations clashed in Scarborough Shoal (1997). 3. Two Chinese fishing boats were sunk by Philippine warships (1999).
Philippines and Vietnam	1. Vietnam fired on a Philippine fishing boat near Tennent Reef (1998). 2. Vietnam fired on a Philippine reconnaissance aircraft in the Spratlys (1999).
Malaysia and Philippines	Both military aircrafts nearly engaged over a Malaysian-occupied reef (1999).
Taiwan and Vietnam	Taiwanese artillery fired on a Vietnamese supply ship (1995).

SOURCE: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *The South China Sea Tables*, February 2001.

multilateral security organization, allowing foreigners to erode Chinese sovereignty.[60]

Given its history of struggles over the disputed islands and waters, China's policy towards neighbouring countries tends to incline towards power rather than negotiation. However, it would probably be difficult for China to seize the entire Spratly group by force if other claimants were to take consolidated action against China's assertiveness. The United States is unlikely to intervene in the Spratly issue unless freedom of navigation is threatened. However, China is anxious about any possible U.S. involvement in a future military clash. In 1997, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang emphasized that Asian security

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should be decided and managed by Asians themselves, and that a multilateral arrangement should be set up to replace U.S. security alliances with Asian countries.[61] From his statement, China seems to desire multilateral negotiations to resolve Asian security issues, but the underlying motivation is likely aimed at eliminating Washington's security involvement in the Asia-Pacific region. Although China agreed to unimpeded international navigation through the South China Sea, Beijing would insist on its exclusive rights of sovereignty and interest with respect to the disputed waters. The South China Sea issue is, of course, only part of China's naval ambitions, with the country continuing to assert its authority over other important regional sea-lanes.

Southeast Asian Straits

The Strait of Malacca[62]

The Strait of Malacca is approximately 500 nautical miles in length and varies in width from 200 miles in the north to 11 miles at its southern extremity. Much of the navigational channel goes through the territorial waters of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore. The Strait provides the shortest passage between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Since ancient times, the Malacca Strait has had enormous economic and strategic significance; thus, the Chinese, Indians, Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch, and British had at various times controlled it before the independence of the three littoral nations. In the fourth century, the Chin dynasty in China lost access to the Central Asian caravan route because of upheavals in Central Asia, and the Chin traders then began to develop sea passages.[63]

The Strait of Malacca was used as an important waterway in the early fifteenth century when the Ming dynasty conducted ambitious maritime expeditions as far as India, the Middle East, and Africa. However, with the decline in the Ming's maritime activities, during the period from 1511 to 1641, the Portuguese controlled the Strait. From 1641, the Dutch exercised sovereignty over the Strait, occasionally denying passage of ships through the Strait, until 1795 when Britain took over Malacca from the Dutch.[64] The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 marked a historic event for the Malacca Strait, making it a major waterway between countries of Europe, East and Southeast Asia.

As the economy of the East Asian countries rapidly grew from the early 1970s, the Strait of Malacca became a vital route for the transport of oil between the Middle East and East Asia. As littoral nations, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore also came to recognize the strategic importance of the Strait for their fishing industry, commerce and security. In recent years, China has concerned itself with the Strait for its

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increasing energy imports from the Middle East and for its maritime influence over Southeast Asia. The Malacca Strait will remain the most important waterway for China to expand its naval power into the Indian Ocean and beyond.

The Sunda Strait

The Sunda Strait is located between Sumatra and Java, and serves as a major sea link from the Indian Ocean to the Java Sea. Before the opening of the Suez Canal, it was a significant trade route between the European and East Asian countries, and assisted in the Dutch penetration of the Indonesian archipelago. Today, the Sunda Strait does not have as much strategic significance as the Malacca Strait because the depth of the strait decreases sharply in the middle.[65] Therefore, the strait is considered not suitable for the passage of very large oil tankers.

The Lombok Strait

The Lombok Strait is located between the islands of Bali and Lombok. The Strait is an important waterway for vessels proceeding between the Makassar Strait and the Indian Ocean. The Lombok Strait is deeper than the Malacca and Sunda straits, and therefore provides the most suitable route for deep-draught vessels.[66] Japanese supertankers use this strait, despite the route being a much longer distance than via the Malacca Strait.[67] For their submerged and stealthy activities, U.S. Navy submarines use the Lombok Strait when deploying from their base in Guam into the Celebes Sea, and then through the Makassar and Lombok straits into the Indian Ocean. The Lombok Strait is also the most important route for vessels moving between Australia and Singapore.

The Makassar Strait

The Makassar Strait is located between the islands of Kalimantan and Celebes. The southern part of the Makassar Strait is partly obstructed by numerous small islands. As a whole, however, the strait is easy to navigate and presents no serious obstacles to ULCCs (ultra large crude carriers) traversing the Lombok Strait to the Celebes Sea before leaving Southeast Asian waters south of Mindanao. There are a number of large offshore and coastal oilfields along the northern half of the Makassar Strait.[68]

The Ombai-Wetar Straits

The Ombai Strait passes between the islands of Alor and Timor, and the Wetar Strait is located between the northern coast of Timor and the southern coast of Wetar. The Ombai-Wetar Straits are used mainly by local shipping, including vessels proceeding between Australia and the

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Java Sea. However, the straits have a strategic significance because they offer a deep-water route for submerged U.S. Navy submarines proceeding from their base in Guam through the Molucca Passage between Sulawesi and Halmahera to other U.S. bases in the Indian Ocean.[69] Although the Ombai-Wetar Straits provide a longer route for U.S. submarine voyages between Guam and the Indian Ocean than does the Lombok-Makassar straits, they are widely used by the U.S. Navy because of the limited traffic in those straits.[70] The *Christian Science Monitor* has reported that "the Ombai-Wetar Straits rank as the second-most-important strait after Gibraltar in the world for U.S. defence interests".[71]

As noted earlier, the Sunda, Lombok-Makassar, and Ombai-Wetar straits have unique significance for international navigation, but these chokepoints are less important than the Straits of Malacca and Singapore for China's maritime future.

China's Political and Military Ambitions in the Strait of Malacca

PLA strategic analysts have identified the controlling of the Malacca Strait as one of China's most urgent tasks, so that no other power is capable of interdicting that passage to the movement of PLAN units.[72] China's strategic hold over the waterway would, however, provoke responses from regional countries and the United States. A study has warned that: "If the U.S. fails to deter China's hegemonic ambitions in Southeast Asia, Americans, one Sunday morning might hear the sound of air raid sirens signalling another Pearl Harbor attack on American interests somewhere in Asia."[73] The littoral nations of the Malacca Strait, namely, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore are regarded as major players with respect to the Strait. However, the three littoral nations are unlikely to contend with China directly over the Malacca Strait. The potential challenge will likely come from Japan and the United States.

The Japanese economy has benefited from the safe shipping of its goods and energy resources through the Malacca Strait for more than half a century, owing to not only the political stability of the littoral states, but also the presence of the U.S. Navy in securing the SLOCs. However, the maritime environment in Southeast Asian seas has been changing with China's naval ambitions in the region. It is reported that PLAN vessels have sometimes stopped, boarded, and searched Japanese, Russian, and Taiwanese ships in the East and South China seas on the pretext of searching for contraband, or challenging those ships in relation to their constituting a threat to navigation.[74] If the Southeast Asian straits were to be closed as a result of China's attempts at control,

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Japanese shipping would be forced to navigate around Australia, and this could result in an increase of 60 per cent to shipping costs.[75] The distance between Kuwait and Yokohama varies significantly based on the use of each strait: it is 6,755 nautical miles via the Malacca Strait; 7,275 nautical miles via the Sunda Strait; 7,635 nautical miles via Lombok Strait; and 11,800 nautical miles around Australia.[76]

Japan's current defence plans call for the protection of sea-lanes up to 1,000 nautical miles from Tokyo, which covers only SLOCs up to Guam and the Bashi Channel, and not the South China Sea, or the Malacca Strait.[77] Thus, the Japanese think that they should have a contingency plan to cope with an unpredictable future. In a debate over the final approval of the 1997 Japan–U.S. Defence Guidelines in May 1999, the Japanese Government attempted to enhance the role of its Self-Defence Forces (SDF), so that it would be tied less to U.S. forces and strategic requirements.[78] China is most concerned that the defence guidelines might involve Taiwan within the range of an expanded role for the JSDF.[79] Any naval conflict between China and Japan would destabilize the Asia-Pacific region. Takashi Oka asserts that, "How China and Japan define their relationships with each other and with the U.S. will determine the long-term stability of the arc from Hokkaido to the Malacca Strait."[80]

If China intends to control Southeast Asia's waterways, what are the implications for the United States? For Washington, the sea-lanes are critically important, both economically and militarily. The total volume of American trade with the Asia-Pacific region has well exceeded that of the European Union (EU) since the mid-1990s, and in 1999 the share of U.S. trade with the Asia-Pacific was 38 per cent of America's total trade, while that of the European Union and Latin America constituted 18 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.[81] More significantly, Southeast Asia's sea-lanes are crucial passageways for U.S. naval force projection in the event of a global crisis. In this context, it is imperative for the United States to secure these SLOCs. It can be said that China's naval challenge is not aimed at the United States directly, but is intended to expand Beijing's naval influence over U.S. friends and allies. China's potential naval presence in Myanmar could harm international navigation in the Strait of Malacca not only for the United States but also for East Asian countries. Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia also worry about China's blue-water naval ambitions in the South China Sea; but they are anxious not to offend Beijing and might feel compelled to adjust to the reality of China's growing naval influence in the region.[82] This possible shift in the balance of power in Southeast Asia would diminish U.S. influence there.

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Conclusion

In the days of superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, Cam Ranh Bay, to which the Soviets gained access after the Sino-Vietnamese War in 1979, played a major role in supporting the Soviet Indian Ocean squadron's activities until the late 1980s.[83] Now, China, as a great power, is gradually replacing the Soviet Union, and appears to have plans to control the SLOCs from the Persian Gulf to mainland China through the Indian Ocean, the Malacca Strait, and the South China Sea. Beijing is also strengthening its navy to secure the position of a hegemonic maritime nation over the Asia-Pacific region, and to compete with the current guarantor of regional security, the United States.[84]

What will be the most desirable option for Asia-Pacific nations with respect to China's maritime ambitions in the regional SLOCs? Southeast Asian nations lie at strategic points along the regional waterways. The ASEAN states have been eager to consolidate their efforts so as to eliminate outside interference in the region. However, regional institutions, such as the ARF and APEC, remain too weak for them to guarantee the stability and security of Southeast Asia's SLOCs. The ASEAN states' ideal solution for regional security and prosperity is to accommodate both China and the United States in the current institutional framework through increasingly close economic co-operation and multinational naval exercises with the two great powers.

The United States has long resumed responsibilities for the stability of regional SLOCs. How effectively the United States handles China's naval ambitions will affect significantly the overall maritime security of the Asia-Pacific region. In this context, Washington's constructive engagement with Beijing could help maintain peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific. The United States' efforts to conduct multinational maritime exercises with all the nations in the Asia-Pacific, including China, could contribute to the security of regional SLOCs and mitigate regional arms races. The sea-lanes in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean are too important not to expend such and other efforts to ensure the continued freedom of their use.

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The Clash of Paradigms: International Administration and Local Political Legitimacy in East Timor

TANJA HOHE[1]

Centuries of Portuguese rule and decades of Indonesian rule over East Timor did not manage to eradicate local socio-political structures that have proved resilient. It is, therefore, not surprising that a state-building exercise by the international community was unable to have much effect on, let alone transform, the local level. This article assesses the clash between the international paradigm of attempting to (re)build the Western liberal-style, democratic state under UNTAET and the existing indigenous paradigm of traditional political legitimacy that prevails among the majority of the population at the local level. Without reconciling the two in future UN interventions, such efforts will continue to be either irrelevant to a self-evolving reality or in fact cause local systems to collapse without being able to adequately replace them. The puzzle of how to build local government, given the two unrelated paradigms, has to be solved.

Introduction

The paradigm of international intervention to rebuild states that have failed, or to build them where they have not existed, constitutes the Westphalian model with governing institutions developed as a result of European history, including a national executive, legislature, and judiciary. It was the standard of measurement of collapse in Somalia, and the basis of large-scale deployments in Cambodia and the Balkans. The end-state of such operations has invariably been an internationally

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supervised or organized and conducted "free" and "fair" election. This democratic impulse has become institutionalized in missions deployed in the wake of the Cold War, including its consideration as a human right.[2] However, the track record of these exercises, resulting supposedly in democracy, having taken hold after the international community withdraws, has defied their purpose.

The idea of the democratic state is that it functions as an entity in which the population participates. What seems to be frequently overlooked is the fact that most populations have never experienced a democratic state nor are their internal paradigms based on liberal-style democratic principles. This is even more true for populations whose paradigms, through which everything new is filtered, came into being in a non-state environment. Traditional society developed to be able to confront a different set of daily and political challenges from the "outside".

To conduct successful state-building, it is therefore crucial for the international community to understand local social structures and ideas of political authority and legitimacy — that is, the local paradigms. Based on this kind of knowledge, a new state-structure can be set up and the implementation of it can happen in a way that will gain local recognition. A government or state-bodies that do not fit with the population's ideas of political legitimacy might be in accordance with international human rights, but contradict local participation. The international community adheres to its own values, but the population ends up with a government and state-bodies that are not accepted within the worldview of the local population (though capable of formal recognition by the international community).

The recent attempt at state-building in East Timor illustrates this clearly. The Transitional Administration built institutions based on the assumption that there were no strong concepts and ideas existing on the local level, and that the population just had to be "taught" democracy. This ignored the fact that human beings grow up in a social environment with powerful ideas of how to classify and understand their world. Local perception of practices was perceived as cultural "folklore" and was not accorded much significance. Therefore, international attempts often failed or had marginal impact.

If planners had accounted for local paradigms, Timorese history, and the evolution of local power structures and political ideas, they might have realized the resilience and stability of local structures. The actual scale of the hurdles of democratization and state-building would have become apparent.

This story can be told through the prism of local political leadership in East Timor. Village and sub-district chiefs and political authorities

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on these levels are clashing on points of traditional ideas and modernity. These power-holders are the most influential and visible ones for the majority of the population. Hence, it is at these levels one can follow the fate of democratization. Social structures and concepts of political authority are the basic matrix on which the holistic socio-cosmos of the local populations is built.

Local Social Structures and Political Concepts

In traditional East Timorese societies, the kinship and marriage system forms an important basis of the social structure. The core concepts of kinship are formed through the idea of a group of people connected through "blood-relations", who make up a lineage or extended family. This group is perceived and defined through the idea of forming a "House". Members are related unilineally through either the father's or mother's side and they refer themselves back to an origin through common ancestors. These ancestors were the first ones to settle on the land. Often, they had separated themselves from another group in the past to establish a new "House", which is represented by an actual building, the "sacred house". The structure of the sacred house expresses socio-cosmic ideas. Heirlooms, sacred items of the ancestors, are kept in it. The oldest living representatives of the House guard these.

A House is an endogamous unit. A well-defined system of marriages connects Houses with each other.[3] It provides a House with "Wife Giver" Houses and "Wife Taker" Houses. This system is asymmetric and, therefore, no reciprocity between two Houses is possible — one cannot give a woman back to the same House that has given a woman. One's Wife Giver and Wife Taker Houses are well defined; they are remembered and play an important role in social life. Once a marriage relation between two Houses is established, it is expected to continue over the following generations. An asymmetric system requires at least three Houses to form a system that can function autonomously. Nevertheless, often more than three Houses are involved in marriage exchanges. New marriage relations between Houses are used to create a peaceful connection (for example, after war). The wider the circles of Houses involved in marriages, the greater the guarantee for peace or for many allies during a time of war. The disruption of peace established by marriage is a social threat and punished by the most feared ancestral powers.

This system was especially important for the definition of a relationship between kingdoms. Timor was divided into a significant number of autonomous kingdoms, each consisting of several Houses located in a specific area. A kingdom was headed by a political ruler,

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the *liurai*. The territory was defined through ancestral land claims. Members of Houses mostly lived geographically separated, in the form of small settlements. Conceptually, all Houses of a kingdom were ordered hierarchically, according to their sequence of arrival on the land. The highest House was usually the one whose ancestors had either appeared on the land first or had migrated from another place to "open" new land. The second and third Houses will have arrived afterwards but are mostly still seen as "old and sacred" Houses. Some of the subsequent Houses would have separated themselves from the older ones and are therefore described as "younger or smaller House of X". Some of them do not own a sacred house, as they are satellites of an older House.

The hierarchical order of Houses defines social relationships — for example, the marriage relationships among them. Older Houses are more likely to be classified as Wife Givers to younger Houses, because Wife Givers are closely connected with the value of fertility, crucial for the continuation of society (without fertile land and fertile women, society would cease to exist), and is usually classified in the category of "old/precedence/land/femaleness".

Within the hierarchical order of Houses, a distribution of tasks and responsibilities exists. The oldest House, with its close connection to the land and the first ancestors, is responsible for fertility. To assure society with fertility, close contact with the ancestral powers is required. The first House, therefore, holds ritual power and plays the most crucial role in all ceremonial activities. In opposition to these ritual tasks stand political issues. The second, or one of the Houses lower in the hierarchy, thus provides the king or the political head of a settlement. These political authorities are responsible for defining the borders of the land, for relations with other kingdoms, for conflict resolution, and all other political issues, such as conducting wars.[4]

Other Houses have minor tasks, such as the responsibility of drumming, acting as settlement chiefs, guarding the water, military power, and so on. These tasks cover all the important issues of life in traditional societies. The tasks are conducted by specific persons originating from the adequate House. They are mostly the oldest or the most capable person of a House. It is important to note that the character of a political leader is, therefore, less important than his origin. The legitimization for certain tasks derives from the "old mythical times" when the ancestors created and ordered society.

A main separation of tasks can be identified: the separation between ritual and political authorities.[5] In some societies, every House has an elder that represents ritual authority and acts on ceremonial occasions. In others, the highest House provides the main ritual authority for the

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entire kingdom. These ritual leaders are the ones that maintain contact with the ancestors, guard the sacred houses, and hold the ultimate responsibility for fertility. Political leaders occur in a binary opposition. They originate from designated Houses and either act as king or head of a village or settlement.

Ritual leaders hold all-encompassing power. Through their contact with the ancestors, they have the ultimate power to appoint political leaders. A political leader can only act with the support and legitimation of the ancestral powers. The basis for an ancestral agreement on a leader is that he originates from a "royal" House with political authority. If a political leader is not ancestrally legitimized (appointed by the ritual leaders), the population will suffer from ancestral punishment, misfortune will hit the community, children will fall sick, the harvest will be destroyed, hence a lack of fertility will rule society. If a House cannot provide a political ruler, the ritual leaders have to find another House as a substitute. In a ceremony, political power is then handed over (mostly symbolized in a stick as an insignia of political rule) to the new House. Ancestrally legitimized, the new House can exert political power without society having to fear ancestral punishment.

Impact of Foreign Rule

Portugal

The first phase of Portuguese colonial rule[6] in East Timor can be characterized by its focus on trade in the geographical area of Dili. It was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that the colonial government decided on a better administrative system of the territory to promote economic development. The country was then divided into eleven districts. A Portuguese commander headed each district, with civilian and military tasks, and a small number of soldiers. The commanders were responsible for peace in their districts and had to work with the local kings. The idea was to strengthen Portuguese rule by influencing the local kings and pacifying them.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the colonial government introduced the "head-tax" system for the Timorese population and stopped the tributes that the population had to pay to their kings. The kings now received part of the officially collected taxes. With these new measures, the Portuguese colonial government turned the kings into their "link" to the population. Finally, the choice of a new king had to be approved by the colonial government.

Eventually, the official power of most kings was abandoned altogether. Districts were then divided into sub-districts (*posto*), and these again into villages (*suco*), and hamlets (*povação*). The Portuguese

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now appointed local village chiefs (*chefe de suco*) and hamlet chiefs (*chefe de povação*) and used them as their link to the local population. The kings' position was now replaced by the Portuguese administration at the sub-district level. In some cases, the sub-district covered the former area of a kingdom, in others they differed. The sub-district chiefs worked right down to the village chiefs. These had to be literate and speak Portuguese. Every week they would come to the sub-district to receive their orders from the colonial government regarding conduct and work in the villages and pass them on to their population. They were held responsible for their communities. The village chief was now called *liurai* in some areas. The hamlet chiefs were active at the lowest level. They collected and passed on the taxes in their respective hamlets and had to watch the workers to make sure they were working well.

In the beginning of colonial rule, the internal social structure of a kingdom was not affected. Only at the very top level, the kings established relations with the Portuguese. The king was the local political authority and the representative of the local community to the colonial power. As his traditional role prescribes, the king was the one who had to negotiate or deal with the "outside" powers, as he held political authority (all legitimized by the ritual authorities within the kingdom). He entered into military treaties to fight the Portuguese, or he would ally with them. Therefore, the Portuguese were never in frequent contact with the local population (though some Timorese claim that the population was unhappy with the fact that the Portuguese were controlling their kings). As the "law" was also left to the kings, they were able to rule in their traditional way within their kingdoms.

When the administrative system was changed, the "official" power of the kings was abandoned, and village chiefs and sub-district chiefs were appointed. As some sub-districts covered the borders of former kingdoms, the king could easily be turned into a sub-district chief or a village chief. In other places, the Portuguese exchanged kings for more loyal people as sub-district chiefs. The kings who were released from their formal power, and were not appointed as sub-district chiefs, transformed into unofficial powers in their kingdoms. The official power was handed over in an adequate way to the new village chiefs, but on the informal level, there was no "loss of power". The powers of the kings remained and the people still adhered to them. The same happened with the village chiefs, who were appointed by the Portuguese in accordance with their loyalty.

In most cases, this did not seem to run counter to the local perception of legitimate political leadership. The important thing was that village chiefs and hamlet chiefs originated from the "right" "royal" Houses and therefore had ancestral legitimization for their role. If new

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appointees were from the "wrong" House, there was a way to ritually pass on the political authority to another family. If the person was from a "commoner" family, the appointment would cause conflicts. In contrast, a person from another area who was still of "royal" origin was acceptable. In some areas, the Portuguese rulers left it up to the local leadership to appoint a person. In these cases, the ritual leadership chose the person of the right descent.

Hence, the new administrative system was integrated into the local system of representations. The sub-district chief ideally had to be a descendant of the "highest sacred House", whereas the hamlet chief and the village chief had to originate from the following sacred Houses in hierarchical order. All positions stayed inherited and had the full acknowledgment of the local population, as they still had ancestral legitimacy. The traditional system continued and new introductions from the outside were neatly integrated into the existing structure. If contradictions evolved, they were dealt with in accordance with the local paradigm. The tasks that the official powers had to fulfil were fitted into the local perception of "political authority". These leaders were linked to the outsiders, the Portuguese Government, and hence still held judicial power.

Under Portuguese rule, the concepts of descent and customary law, conduct of ceremonies, or the position of ritual authorities were never challenged.[7] Ritual life remained strong, as it was perceived to be the "inside" of society, and had nothing to do with "outside" political issues.

The Portuguese strategic approach used respect for traditional institutions as a tool. Entering blood oaths was a local method to establish peace and worked well for the Portuguese in pacifying the local kings and to receive their support. They also married the local kings' daughters to establish important Wife Giver and Wife Taker relationships with the kingdoms. Through this strategy, some of the kings were tied into such strong relationships with the Portuguese that they had to help the Portuguese fight against other kings.[8]

Indonesia

With the Indonesian occupation, the Portuguese administrative structure was altered and adjusted to the Indonesian system. At the sub-district level, the government was composed of a centrally-appointed sub-district chief and other administrative officers in charge of civil administration, personnel, welfare, rural development, finance, and village offices. Like the Portuguese, the Indonesians had an interest in finding loyal people for these positions. Nevertheless, they tried to make use of the local system to receive local recognition of official

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positions. This led to a diverse picture. In some cases, former kings were appointed for the position (even better if they were pro-Indonesian), or persons from "royal" families who seemed loyal to the government were brought in from other districts. The local population often claimed that their ritual authorities were still involved in the appointments. The space that ritual leadership was given depended on how much resistance the governmental authorities faced in a specific area. If former leaders were replaced, they often still held informal power and acted in conflict resolution. Nevertheless, most people state that the Indonesians did not honour the kings and village chiefs any longer.

The obvious change in the system of local leadership seemed to be the introduction of popular democratic elections for the position of the village chief. The Indonesian system prescribed that they had to be elected democratically. The attempt to introduce local-level democracy led to the official abandonment of power positions that depended on descent.

In 1982, the first five-yearly democratic elections for the position of the village chief were held. The elections of the village chiefs were prepared by the sub-district chiefs in co-operation with people at the village level, the hamlet chiefs, and the traditional elders. They were from two village councils, called LKMD and LMD,[9] and they selected two or three candidates for the elections. The main criteria for a candidate's eligibility were their origin from the village in question, knowledge about law, and ability to resolve conflict.

Asked about the process of elections, many locals described it as "democratic". However, this democratic appearance evaporates when one looks into the background of candidate selection. The power-holders of the village still made their decisions on the choice of candidates in accordance with the traditional power structure. Descent still played an important role. The method of selecting candidates was very traditional. A specific group of people sat together and discussed the choice of candidates until a consensus was reached. Therefore, different local powers had their influence on the actual outcome of the elections, not least the ritual authorities, which had to sanction the selection. After that, the people voted in the "democratic" elections for the "right" person. In their perception, the "*liurai* now became the village chief". A significant number of the population in the rural areas, and especially the traditional elders, still adhered to the idea that the village chief has to originate from a "royal" House that holds political authority. Thus, in many cases where there was no outside interference, the candidate of the "appropriate" family was elected and his informal power became formal power again.

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The Indonesian Government and the armed forces then adjusted the election results to their own interests. In some of the politically sensitive areas, the Indonesian Government and the military are said to have put the village chiefs of their own choice in place. If this was the "wrong" person according to the local perception, there were several local coping mechanisms. The elders could excuse a change in power by claiming that people "just voted like that", because they did not know who was the right person to be the village chief. However, the elders feared ancestral sanctions if the "wrong" person sat on the *cadera manas* (hot chair). To avoid misfortune, the former leader had to keep his position in ritual functions. The new leader had to be ritually legitimized by the "royal" family by entering their sacred House and asking the proper king for permission to rule on his behalf. The descendants of the "royal" House would then pass on the rattan stick and appoint the member from the new family as their representative. In other examples, the new leader was at least declared to be of "royal descent". Even when persons were put in charge who were closely connected to the pro-Indonesian forces, the ritual elders would still try to legitimize them by tracing "royal" blood in their ancestry, to avoid ancestral sanctions. Nevertheless, these village chiefs did not enjoy much trust from their community. They needed the official governmental power behind them to exert their power. The population in these cases would explain that they were only "transitional".

At the hamlet level, the appointments and the background of the hamlet chiefs were even more traditional, compared with the case of the village chiefs, since government interference here was not strong. The hamlet chiefs were not elected democratically, but appointed by the communal leaders through traditional methods. The elders, in agreement with the village chiefs, would gather to discuss who was the right persons for the position. If a village chief wanted to appoint someone from a "commoner House", the people would not agree. The person appointed to act as hamlet chief (*kepala dusun*) would usually originate from a "royal" House.

Regardless of this obvious continuation of local structures, the Indonesians considered the rulers as "democratically elected". On the surface, it looked as if a change in the power system had occurred, but in fact, the local structures continued to survive. Even in cases where the Timorese claimed that the Indonesian system was different and the ancestry of a leader was no longer important, the origin of the village chiefs in Indonesian times often still indicated that they were from the "political" sacred House. In other cases, it seemed that people took advantage of the new rule to get rid of a particularly unpopular ruler and to reduce his power to merely symbolic.

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Clandestine System

Parallel to the Indonesian governmental system, a clandestine system for resistance against Indonesian occupation was put in place. The resistance was organized in three parts: as a military front (Falintil), an internal clandestine structure, and a political and diplomatic front that operated from outside the country. Falintil had two major functions: the political organization of the masses through the clandestine front, and military attacks on Indonesian positions through guerrilla strategies.

Through the clandestine structure, a large number of people supported Falintil and its struggle for independence after successful socialization. Falintil commanders were powerful and respected leaders in their communities. They set up a clandestine parallel system of governance to support the resistance fight. This network of key individuals was composed of the head of the village (*nurep*) and the hamlet leader (*celcom*). Their main tasks were to organize the population to support the resistance fighters and to establish an information system for the population. Although Falintil nominated *nureps* and *celcoms* in the early nineties, most of them had been actively involved in the resistance movement since the mid-eighties. The designation of the clandestine "power-holders" by Falintil at the local level was organized through a consultation process with community members. It took into account the relationship of the potential candidate with the population, his work performance, and particularly his trustworthiness. The clandestine sub-district chief (*secretario de zona*) was chosen by Falintil commanders.

How many of the *nureps* were actually from "royal" families is another point.[10] In many cases, the "Indonesian" village chief filled the "politically" classified positions in the village or hamlet anyway. Hence, on the political level, everything was in accordance with traditional requirements. Nevertheless, in some cases, the *nurep* was also from a "political family" (for example, his older brother might be the village chief).

The clandestine resistance was not officially recognized and thus, in local perceptions the clandestine powers were not classified as traditional political authorities. The backgrounds of the clandestine leaders reveal that the population, in their work and deeds, mostly trusted them. Here, another traditional idea of "capacity as a warrior" comes into play. The character of the person was emphasized. This trust is very different from the belief that a specific person has to hold the political chair in order to avoid sanctions from their ancestors. The clandestine movement supported Falintil as "warriors" and not necessarily as people in the traditional position of political authority. Even nowadays, Falintil fighters without a "royal" background are

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honoured and respected by the traditional elders, but they deny them a position as political leaders. On the other hand, famous warriors with the appropriate family background can be expected to become the new political leaders of the country.[11]

Under the Transitional Administration

After the vote for independence in 1999, militias reduced East Timor to ashes, the Indonesian population left the country entirely, and many East Timorese were forced to flee across the border to West Timor. After the rampages had ceased, the former Indonesian administrative system was entirely destroyed. The international community perceived this situation as a "power-vacuum". Therefore, the United Nations received the mandate to provide a transitional administration over the territory. Somewhat "unofficially", the former resistance movement immediately restructured the country from the national to the lowest hamlet levels.

UNTAET and CNRT

The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in its early days chose to retain the system of the former Indonesian administration. In addition to a central authority at the national level, it set up district administrations in, what had become under Indonesian rule, thirteen districts. The main links of these district administrations to the lowest levels of society were through the international District Field Officer (DFO), who consulted with the population at the sub-district level and co-ordinated governmental matters with the village chiefs. The DFOs, therefore, played a crucial role in forming the local perception of UNTAET at the local level. They were mostly respected because of their "high" position, but many people felt that they did not have sufficient cultural knowledge.[12] At the same time, a parallel local structure was re-established by the Council for National Resistance in Timor (CNRT),[13] based on the existing clandestine structure. At the district, sub-district, village and hamlet levels, representatives were recruited mainly through the leaders of the former clandestine and Falintil structures.

Many sub-district chiefs or village chiefs of the transitional period were not elected democratically but appointed by Falintil, the CNRT, and village elders. There was, in most cases, an agreement between the CNRT and Falintil about whom to appoint. In conjunction with this, the village elders gathered to discuss the appointment according to the local concept of political authority. Village elders stated that the appointment was decided by them, but had to be confirmed by the CNRT and Falintil. The criteria used were the person's descent, his

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activities in the clandestine movement, former communal activities and possible detainment by the TNI, and his ability as a leader in conflict resolution.

In probably six out of thirteen districts, Fretilin's Internal Political Front (FPI) conducted their own elections for village chief in the name of the CNRT. The sub-district representative was responsible for the campaign, and the population was briefed about the process. A census of the village population was held to identify the number of voters. Candidates were selected through the hamlets. The selection at the hamlet level was conducted by the traditional elders and heads of the Houses. Thus, the ritual authorities could exert their influence for the "right" candidate. The same procedure is said to have been followed by the village chiefs, for the election of the hamlet chiefs. In the selection of the hamlet chiefs, not many "outside powers", Timorese or international, seemed to have been involved.

If one looks at this system parallel to the UNTAET administration, the sub-district chief was often still of "royal" descent. When asked, however, the Timorese claimed that they were closely connected with the fight for independence, and that the clandestine structure and their descent was no longer that important. The same was true for the majority of the village chiefs, who mostly still had the "right" descent, or at least, the elders tried to find a link in their genealogy to a "royal" House to justify their positions. In those cases where the village chief did not have the "right" descent, two opposing groups of opinions existed. The traditional elders and a big part of the village population found several reasons to explain why the leader was "wrong". He was perceived as only "transitional" until the right person could be found, or the former chiefs would work closely with the Indonesians and militias, and still hold ceremonial functions. Thus, if for very pragmatic reasons, the "right" family could no longer rule, it was still given a ritual position. The other group rejected the importance of descent and wanted to turn to a modern system. They either emphasized the deeds of the leader in the resistance movement, his personal capability, or that it was the people's choice.

Even recently, the main powers at the local level were still with the village chief, the hamlet chief, and the traditional elders (which now had become "unofficial" because of UNTAET). The village chief remained a very central figure, as he was the junction where clandestine powers, traditional political concepts, and the modern world collided with one another. He was still the crucial point of contact for the relationship between the "inside" and the "outside", between the local level and the government. UNTAET also empowered the village chiefs, although not formally, by inviting them to meetings and by co-ordinating

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all issues with them. Hence, the village chief retained the monopoly on information about government, development, and all issues that had to do with life "outside" the village, which confirmed his position as the traditional political authority.

Conflicting Realities

After more than a year of the Transitional Administration, the DFO, now established at the sub-district level, received a Timorese counterpart. The idea was to train a Timorese in this position so that they could finally hand over authority to him as the government representative of the sub-district.[14] There was no formal plan to turn the CNRT sub-district leader into the new official sub-district chief (in some cases, however, the district administrations did promote the former CNRT person whom they had unofficially worked with for more than a year).

For the position of the sub-district chief, Timorese were encouraged to submit their curriculum vitae to the central Civil Service and Public Employment Service (CISPE).[15] Here a combination of international staff and Timorese would select the person with the best qualifications for a position that they perceived as "administrative". The main criteria were education and working experience. From an international perspective, these qualities were seen as most appropriate for "administrative" tasks. In contrast, the local perception attributed this position with much wider political power as it covered the area of a kingdom/sub-district. It therefore had to be ancestrally legitimized.

The official candidates were also much younger because of the educational background required. They were not chosen with regard to their origin, their influential personality, or their capability in conflict resolution, one of the main functions of the local political authorities. For the local population this was hard to accept, as it contradicted with the local paradigmatic principles of seniority and leadership. An older person was regarded as superior, and therefore commanded more respect and was imbued with more authority. A young person in a position of "political authority" would only be acceptable if he was the last available person from a specific family carrying "political power". Apart from this, in some places the new sub-district heads originated from other sub-districts/districts. This was also difficult to accept; even more so if the person was not of the "right" descent.

In areas where the former CNRT sub-district leaders were hired,[16] the "recognized" person remained in his position. In nearly every area with a different leader chosen by the authorities in Dili, there was often protest from the local population because they felt that the former CNRT leader should be rewarded and honoured for his deeds during

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the resistance. Instead, he was disregarded and replaced by a younger person. Furthermore, the criterion applied in the selection of the former CNRT leaders — namely, their deeds during the resistance fight — was also not considered when the appointments of the new sub-district chiefs were made. Thus, the new sub-district leaders had a difficult time gaining acceptance and their authority was very limited, overshadowed by the traditional/clandestine leaders.

In contrast to the employment of sub-district chiefs, the Transitional Administration never became involved in the choice of village chiefs (with the exception of some DFOs who were requested to assist in the local village chief elections). For most of the period, the CNRT-appointed/FPI elected village chiefs remained in their positions. They played a crucial role as the link between the activities of the local population, the Transitional Administration and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), during the period of reconstruction of the country. They were continuously consulted by international and national actors. Although UNTAET never formally acknowledged them, it always maintained a working relationship with them. The village chiefs often claimed that they continued in this volunteer position because they felt responsible for their people and were called upon, and there was no way they could refuse. In contrast to the newly selected sub-district co-ordinators, the local population never questioned their authority.

In June 2001, the CNRT dissolved itself in order to create a political arena for the Constituent Assembly elections to be held less than three months later. At their Congress in Dili, the idea of dissolution created confusion among all the CNRT district and sub-district representatives who had travelled to the capital. There was opposition and a lack of understanding for the dissolution. This was not surprising as the traditional concept of "unity" was very important for the maintenance of peace and stability. Finally, the CNRT president, Xanana Gusmão, gave the order to dissolve, to which nobody protested, as it was an order from the top. Yet, representatives went back to their districts to pass on the new order without understanding the reasons.

The message caused even more confusion at the village level, where the CNRT-appointed village chiefs lost their "legal" basis of power. Yet, backed by their traditional legitimacy or because of the transitional character of the period, most village chiefs remained, although in some cases the village chief's authority was questioned as a result of the loss of the "legalizing" umbrella to work under. He was still asked to work for his community and frequently used by international actors, while opponents started to use the new "legal" vacuum to undermine his position. The CNRT dissolution, therefore,

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opened the door for the appearance of traditional local factions, or factions that had emerged during the resistance fight along traditional structural lines.[17] In the wake of the "unity" brought by the CNRT, factions now had the opportunity to revive. As a result, local communities stopped respecting the "unwanted" village chiefs, or one faction would work against him. Factions were also disguised as representatives of political parties or organizations.

Fretilin had started in March 2001 to elect party representatives at all administrative levels, from the hamlet up to the national level. For the majority of the population, Fretilin was the only party they had ever heard of. The CNRT village chief was also confirmed as a Fretilin representative. Yet, in some places a new Fretilin representative at the village level suddenly emerged as an opposition to the former CNRT candidate. Traditionally opposed groups would then support different leaders; this increased local tensions. Some Fretilin representatives misunderstood the idea of a multi-party system and requested the UNTAET district administration to stop working with the former CNRT representatives, and to co-ordinate with them "as the whole village is Fretilin anyway".

Apart from local tensions, international aid also exerted some pressure on the village chiefs. On the top of some village chiefs' list of complaints were humanitarian aid projects. One important example that was mentioned by many village chiefs across the country was the "Food For Work" projects, run by the World Food Programme (WFP). Villagers were also encouraged to clean up their houses, clear roads, or do other communal work for monetary payment. This kind of communal activity had always been the duty of each society member in a village or a hamlet. It used to be the village chiefs' task to co-ordinate this work. As humanitarian aid projects had now started to pay people to do exactly the same kind of tasks, the idea of voluntary communal work was undermined. The community no longer heeded the orders of the village chiefs. Many chiefs felt discouraged and their position undermined (apart from the fact that the projects had stopped and these tasks were not done any longer). In other cases, the projects increased the power of the village chiefs, which compensated them for a possible lack of political legitimacy.

The different civic education efforts had their own impact. The spontaneous idea people got after some civic education campaigns was that: "we have democracy now, and therefore do not need to listen to our village chief anymore". These statements led to village-level anarchy and were used whenever convenient by any person who wanted to act independently without the agreement of the village chief or any local authority.

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In general, the important position of the village chief remained a traditionally legitimate one, although it suffered from factionalism. Confusion was caused through the introduction of material payment. The establishment of a multi-party system, independence, and democracy, were all understood and used in accordance with the local paradigm. Only in a few urban centres were things different. The position of the village chief in the urban environment was either no longer a traditional one, or his communal identity was still linked to the original rural area. Migrants in the capital still adhered to the system in the home village. As tradition in the city was not available as a back-up, the dissolution of the CNRT ended the power of these village chiefs. Hence, village chiefs began to request for official status and reimbursement for their work. This was after nearly two years of voluntary work, at a time when many people had lost all their belongings. They had support from the Timorese leadership at the national and district levels who had a better understanding of the salaries paid to national and international staff. The main argument was that the village chiefs under Indonesian rule had been paid modest amounts as reimbursement.

The village chiefs in the rural areas also asked for official/outside acknowledgment of their political authority to reinforce it.[18] They requested an official letter from the government to clearly state their position and to legalize it among the population, as well as to receive recognition for their work. Others just wanted support against the above-mentioned political threats and their opponents. The Cabinet member for internal administration thus issued a letter to the village chiefs in June 2001, asking for the continuation of their service but adding that there would be no financial reward for the time being. The letter was sent to the district administration to be conveyed via the DFOs to the village chiefs. This resulted in disappointment on the part of the local leadership who had wanted an issued and stamped letter in their hands.

The Clash of Paradigms

According to local perceptions, political leadership had to be based on ancestral legitimacy, otherwise the continuation of society was threatened. Throughout the many years of external pressures, the local system of ideas and values have proven to contain the mechanisms for the integration of foreign influence.[19] "Outside" powers were always classified in a certain way according to the local value system. Their attempts to change this system were never really successful. The heart

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of society lay in its ritual life, which was superior to the political authorities it appointed. The ritual leadership was never a target of campaigns by foreign rulers, as its importance was never fully realized.[20]

Nevertheless, "modernity" had been introduced during these years of foreign rule. A Portuguese-educated élite, people in the diaspora and those who had been educated under the Indonesian system, began to question traditional paradigms. These individuals dealt mainly with the international world in the most recent period of Timorese history. In the rural areas, local systems of ideas and values were still strong, and this was where the majority of the population lived — a population that should be participating in the new state and be represented in the government.

The positions of the village chief and the sub-district head were located along the line where the traditional world met the modern-state administration. They were important powers in the daily life of the community (compared with national level politicians). Hence, at this level, paradigms clashed. The central government-appointed sub-district leaders faced difficulties as they were in opposition to the leadership that enjoyed legitimacy in the eyes of the local population.

The most crucial and difficult decision on how to handle the role and appointment of the village chiefs has been left to the new Timorese government. The democratic state-paradigm has prescribed that local leaders should be: (a) selected by a trusted state-body in accordance with their capacity, or (b) democratically elected by the population.

The selection of local leaders by a state body requires trust in the state. Yet, the system of local leadership has evolved and functioned in a non-state environment. Kingdoms were autonomous entities involved in specific relations with each other, but were not set up to operate under a state entity with state bodies. A division of power operated along entirely different (hierarchical) lines: the ritual versus political issues. The concept of a state with citizens who enjoy equal rights and with state bodies that are divided along executive-legislative and judicial lines is quite outside the traditional system. It is also impossible to create instant trust in state bodies, and it is difficult to generate trust in leaders that are not intimately connected with sacred items and ancestral legitimacy.[21] Such a state body then selects the local "political leadership" instead of the choice being made by the core society (ritual leaders).

The conduct of democratic elections for a government (that is, theoretically to form trusted state bodies) or even for local leadership is based on the idea that every individual is equal and should therefore be represented equally in the government or local leadership. The local

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system was holistic, consisting of hierarchical relationships. The dualistic relation of ritual and political authority was context dependant, but always hierarchical. Political power was ultimately legitimized by the superiority of ritual authority. The same hierarchical structure applied for the Houses/families within a kingdom. The Houses were hierarchically ordered with tasks according to their position, all well-defined by ancestral legacy and dangerous to question. The kingdom formed the ultimate autonomous entity that had to enter into relationships with other kingdoms for its survival. Again, relations between kingdoms were defined in a hierarchical way, either through kinship terms or through marriage relations. This hierarchical nature contradicted profoundly with the set-up of a democratic state, which is based on the notion of equality (not that they always operate in this fashion).

In the light of the perpetual stability of the local systems and their isolation from the internationally applied paradigm of democracy, it becomes apparent how international intervention is limited for as long as it does not integrate local paradigms.

Conclusion

The example of East Timor dramatically indicates that state-building and democratization through international intervention require re-thinking. Local ideas can only be transformed with the full consideration of the existing systems to either: (a) avoid the creation of anarchy or the collapse of a social system, or (b) avoid the failure of the intervention because it has no influence at all. The population's trust in state-bodies has to be fostered and the puzzle of how to overcome paradigmatic differences in terms of local governance has to be solved.

Most important for the reform of the local system (if the international community has ethically decided to do so) is to understand it as a holistic entity. Local cultures have to be understood as "systems", and not as a bundle of diverse cultural aspects. These are not anarchical societies which have to learn the pure idea of democracy, but complex systems that define the world and that are holistic in the combination of their elements. They have proven their effectiveness over a long period of time. They form the people's paradigm, the way they order and categorize their lives and events. One cannot introduce only single aspects from a different paradigm. They will either not be accepted or they will cause the holistic system to crash or transform itself unpredictably. The population cannot participate in political life on a democratic basis, while closely connected issues, such as ritual life, remain based on a different paradigm for folkloric purposes.

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As the population needs to truly participate in the state and must therefore understand the idea of a state (as opposed to a new power élite running a country based on the ignorance of the local population), social changes have to occur as transformations from within society, from the epi-centre of the system. International actors can only support changes but not inflict them.

State-building can reaffirm international notions of democracy to make a state compatible with the international world. Nevertheless, local governance should be a system that gives space to both paradigms — the indigenous and the democratic one. If this space is neglected, the population will not recognize the new "official" local leadership or national state-bodies. If a leader has no recognition, he is left to rely on state-bodies as a source of his legitimacy. Yet, traditional society does not trust in state-bodies. If local leaders now use state-bodies to enforce their legitimacy, state-bodies will never gain popular acceptance.

A better way to establish local governance is to create a modern system that leaves space for local ideas to: (a) give local leaders acknowledgement if necessary and, (b) let society slowly but profoundly adopt/transform into a state system.

Local level democratic elections should be conducted, but not be seen as "training for democracy". The people should be left to decide on a ruler, adhering to whatever paradigm they desire. The concept of local leadership can then transform "naturally" into a society that is based on democratic principles, or remain as it is.

In the meantime, international efforts should focus on the population's access to education and information, to promote reconciliation between the two paradigms. Civic education and school education are crucial starting points in which international actors can become active. Still, traditional paradigms are the starting point to explain differences and to give the effort a meaningful outcome, otherwise international educational efforts will fail for the same paradigmatic reasons.

Only an approach in which all paradigms involved are taken into consideration and paradigmatic differences are acknowledged, would leave people with a genuine "choice".

NOTES

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1. Tanja Hohe served for two and a half years in East Timor, including as a District Electoral Officer for UNAMET, and a District Field Officer and Political Affairs Officer for UNTAET. She also co-authored for the World Bank its Final Report on "Traditional Power Structures and the Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project" (2001).
2. Thomas M. Frank, "The Emerging Right to Democratic Governance", *American Journal of International Law* (1992), p. 86.
3. See Sofi Ospina and Tanja Hohe, *Traditional Power Structures and the Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project*, Report prepared for the World Bank and UNTAET (Dili, 2001), p. 20.
4. Ibid., p. 23.
5. See E. Traube, *Cosmology and Social Life. Ritual Exchange among the Mambai of East Timor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
6. For an account of the Portuguese history in Timor, see M. Schlicher, *Portugal in Ost Timor* (Hamburg: Abera Verlag, 1996).
7. The latter was challenged by the church, rather than by the colonial government.
8. See, for example, the Manufahi War (1911–12).
9. The Indonesian Government had formed village councils: LKMD or Lambaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa (Council of the Village People); and LMD or Lembaga Musyawarah Desa (like the Council of the Elders). It is claimed that the LKMDs worked in a very nepotistic and corrupt manner. Most of the council members were government workers, sometimes coming from other areas and not local villagers. They were sometimes blamed for using development money for themselves. The head of the LKMD in the village could make his own decisions because he did not have to report to anyone. The population was not free to complain and there was no transparancy.
10. In some cases, the conflict was neatly solved when the older brother from the royal line functioned as village chief, while his younger brother was a clandestine *nurep*.
11. Such as the chief of the new East Timor Defence Force (ETDF), Brig. Gen. Taur Matan Ruak. Here, local concepts can create a real danger for state-building, as they do not separate the role of the army from political involvement. There was no reaction when Taur Matan Ruak explained that the defence force would support Xanana as a candidate for presidency. "FDTL dukung Xanana jadi presiden TL", *Suara Timor Lorosae*, 4 December 2001, Dili.
12. In some sub-districts, the DFO was called *administrador* by the local Timorese, as the sub-district chief was called in Portuguese times.
13. The council was established in 1998 to serve as an umbrella organization for all resistance parties and organizations.
14. This new authority came under the East Timor Transitional Administration (ETTA). ETTA was established in July 2000 to gradually take over the governance and public administration sectors from UNTAET.
15. This came under the ETTA structure.
16. This happened after the dissolution of the CNRT in June 2001. Therefore, the former CNRT leaders were not in any recognized power position.
17. The emerging new factions appeared to structurally resemble former traditional hostile relationships, such as between kingdoms. Relationships between kingdoms were defined either through kinship or marriage relations, or through hostility. With the "loss" of the importance of kingdom borders, social rifts appeared along other lines, yet on a similar structural basis. During the resistance movement, for

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example, some hamlets were pro-Indonesian while others supported Falintil. These hostilities partly confirmed former entities that were entangled in a hostile relationship under Portuguese rule. Nowadays, the same entites adhere to different political parties or organizations. Often, these rifts seem to occur along the lines of hamlets (confirming a family), or other traditional entities, and so there seems to be a strong dialectic between traditionally opposing parts that "naturally" entangle with opposing groups.

18. External recognition is an important part of the socio-cosmic system. The Portuguese flag became, in this context, a symbol for external recognition, and was kept in many Houses as a sacred item.
19. The capacity to integrate foreign influence was first mentioned by van Wouden as one of the core features in the structure of Eastern Indonesian societies. *Sociale structuurtypen in de Groote Oost* (Leiden/The Hague: KITLV, 1935).
20. Only ritual authorities were targetted by the church as they seemed to contradict Christian ideas. Ironically, the church only became powerful in the political context of the resistance movement.
21. That is why elders try to connect leaders such as Xanana to their royal descent to justify their present position.

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Australia's Peacekeeping Role in the Post-Cold War Era

DEREK McDOUGALL

"Globalism", "nationalism", and "regionalism" were important themes in the rationale of the pre-1996 Labor government in Australia for involvement in peacekeeping, but the latter two have become increasingly important. Since 1996, the conservative Coalition government has focused primarily on "nationalism" and "regionalism"; East Timor was the most significant peacekeeping operation ever undertaken by Australia. In normal circumstances, the major domestic influences on Australian approaches to peacekeeping emanate from the foreign policy and defence bureaucracies and from the foreign minister. At the international level, pressures relating to regional developments and the involvement of the United States and the United Nations are important.

Introduction

In the post-Cold War era, "expanded peacekeeping" has become an important feature of international politics. This is set out under Chapter VII of the United Nations (UN) Charter, which states that intervening forces are authorized to use "all necessary means" to achieve the objectives of peace and security in a particular situation. During the Cold War, peacekeeping had mostly been based on Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Peacekeeping forces played a role in implementing agreements between parties that had previously been in conflict. With variations depending on specific circumstances, expanded peacekeeping has been the basis for interventions in northern Iraq in support of the Kurds (1991), Bosnia (1992–95), Somalia (1992–95), Haiti (1994–97),

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Rwanda (1994–96), East Timor (1999–2002), and Sierra Leone (since 1999). The United Nations Security Council authorized intervention but the UN would not necessarily organize the intervening force. There was sometimes resort to "coalitions of the willing" to provide the necessary forces for expanded peacekeeping. The Kosovo intervention of 1999 was not specifically authorized by the UN Security Council, but was conducted under the auspices of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Against the background of these changes occurring in relation to peacekeeping at the global level, we can ask what position Australian governments have taken on this issue. Australia has played a significant role in relation to a number of peacekeeping operations in the post-Cold War era. What has been the political rationale for Australian involvement? What political influences, domestic and international, have shaped the policies of Australian governments? In practice, what have been the main motivations for the various Australian peacekeeping operations? What political impact have Australian interventions had compared with the initial rationales?

While recent assessments of Australia's peacekeeping role have rightly focused on the East Timor intervention, this article reviews the whole post-Cold War era. It deals primarily with the broader political context rather than giving attention to the many operational issues that have been of particular concern to Australian defence planners. The argument presented is that Australian involvement in peacekeeping has been primarily the outcome of perceptions of national interest held by key decision-makers. However, those perceptions have been tempered by moral considerations. This was more explicitly the case under the Labor government before 1996, but has not been absent under the conservative Coalition government since 1996. Beginning under Labor, and becoming even more pronounced under the Coalition, there was a trend towards concentrating Australian peacekeeping efforts in its immediate region. Apart from a public perception that Australia should be contributing to the resolution of major international humanitarian crises, the most significant influences on Australian policy emanate from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Department of Defence. Within this context, the relevant ministers usually also have a strong impact. If a major crisis with peacekeeping implications arises then a wider range of ministers will be involved, and public pressure can also be a major factor. At the international level, the relationship with allies, particularly the United States, and regional states can be an influence. The United States has an expectation that Australia will play a leading role in dealing with issues in maritime Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands. At the same time, Australia

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wishes to proceed in such a way that it maintains co-operative relationships, as much as possible, with the governments in those regions. The United Nations itself frequently looks to Australia as a reliable contributor when a peacekeeping operation is being mounted. In general, the effect of Australian involvement in international peacekeeping has been to maintain its credentials as an active contributor in dealing with humanitarian crises that come before the "international community". Australian involvement alone is not decisive, but is significant within the context of the coalitions that are formed to deal with such crises. The East Timor intervention is an exception to this latter statement. In this case, Australia took the lead in forming the coalition, and the intervention would not have occurred without Australian leadership. Australian involvement in peacekeeping operations in the post-Cold War world has provided experience in multilateral diplomacy and the formation of coalitions in this area.

In developing this argument, attention will first be given to the period of the Labor government from the late 1980s to 1996, and then to the Coalition government in office since 1996. Given the general approaches to peacekeeping as they have developed under the two governments, an interesting area to observe is the extent to which Australian involvement in peacekeeping, in practice, has been consistent with these approaches. In general, there has been a high level of consistency but governments have also had to respond to events as they arose.

The Labor Period: Late 1980s until 1996

The positions developed within the Department of Defence and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) were a strong influence on the policies of the Labor government towards peacekeeping from the late 1980s to 1996. In addition, Gareth Evans, as Foreign Minister, took a strong interest in this area and exerted a significant influence. While there is some evidence of a tension between "nationalist" and "globalist" orientations in government approaches at this stage, there was also a trend towards putting greater emphasis on "regionalist" considerations. The major military commitment under the Labor government was not to peacekeeping but to the Gulf War, an instance of "peace enforcement". However, this similarly involved such matters as coalition diplomacy and the relationship with the United States and (from the perspective of the Defence Department) was an out-of-area operation. In terms of peacekeeping as such, globalist assumptions were particularly relevant in Namibia, Somalia, and Rwanda. They were present too in Cambodia, but regionalism was also an important consideration. Australian forces

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did not have a significant impact on their own but contributed as part of broader coalitions. Australia enhanced its credentials as a "good international citizen". In the case of Cambodia, Australia played a more significant role compared with the other situations.

One way of determining the nature of views held within the Labor government towards peacekeeping is to examine important public documents and statements. In terms of government structure, the department concerned with the operational aspects of peacekeeping is the Department of Defence. Hence, White Papers and other major statements on defence give some indication of thinking within the Australian defence bureaucracy on peacekeeping issues. The broader strategic and international aspects of peacekeeping come more within the purview of the DFAT. This department does not normally issue White Papers as such, and hence evidence on views within the DFAT is more diffuse. In the case of peacekeeping issues, Gareth Evans as Foreign Minister had strong views of his own, and his various speeches, statements, and writings also give an indication of the direction taken by the Labor government.

Defence statements issued in the early 1990s indicated an increasing Australian emphasis on peacekeeping operations. Following a paper on peacekeeping in 1993,[1] major statements on defence in 1993 and 1994 specifically addressed the issue. *Strategic Review 1993* has argued that the enhanced role of the UN should not be seen as a substitute for national defence.[2] Australia should contribute to "multinational security operations in our own region which have greater strategic importance for Australia because of their more direct contribution to our own security", while also recognizing that multinational security has global dimensions.[3] Alliance considerations relating to the United States were relevant, particularly for peace enforcement operations.[4] At the same time, the statement saw scope for regional initiatives in peacekeeping, including encouragement for participation by Japan.[5]

The 1994 Defence White Paper appeared to be more forthright in recognizing the way in which "effective UN mechanisms for conflict resolution, prevention and resolution" contributed to Australian national interests.[6] Participation in peacekeeping operations could support Australia's strategic interests, while also complementing the country's regional and alliance interests (particularly with New Zealand and the United States).[7] In other cases, Australian participation in peacekeeping was related to support for international humanitarian objectives.[8] Australia's international standing was enhanced, in turn increasing its influence over issues such as the reform of the UN's role in the maintenance of international peace and security.[9] Despite this recognition of the importance of Australian participation in

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peacekeeping, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) continued to structure its operations for the defence of Australia rather than have special forces for peacekeeping. The ADF was sufficiently versatile to adapt to any requests for involvement in peace operations.[10]

This review of the evolution of thinking on peacekeeping within the Defence Department provides one perspective on Australian policy. Another perspective comes from focusing on the position of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, particularly the views of Gareth Evans as Foreign Minister. Hugh Smith has characterized the DFAT position on peacekeeping in the early 1990s as "globalist", as opposed to the "nationalist" orientation of Defence.[11] The DFAT's responsibility was to assess proposals for involvement in peacekeeping from the perspective of how such involvement would affect Australia's international position. This starting point necessarily made the DFAT approach broader in scope than the more operational emphasis inherent in the way the Defence Department approached the issue. In the case of DFAT, one also has to take into account Gareth Evans' strong interest in peacekeeping and related matters.[12] One element in Evans' thinking was the concept of "good international citizenship". This concept suggested that Australia should approach international issues not simply in terms of national interest, narrowly defined, but on the basis of how Australian involvement might contribute to the goal of a just world.[13] This did not mean abandoning the concept of national interest but tempering it with a stronger emphasis on moral considerations. Peacekeeping seemed an ideal issue for implementing some of the goals of good international citizenship. Evans' approach might be seen as "globalist" but he also gave particular attention to issues of more immediate concern to Australia, most notably the Cambodian conflict (discussed further below). Indeed, it could be argued that Evans was a "regionalist" as well as a "globalist". The regional orientation can be seen, for example, in his 1989 statement on regional security.[14] By the end of Evans' tenure as Foreign Minister in 1996, the regional elements in his thinking (and in the position of the DFAT) were just as strong as the global elements. While there is some merit in the argument about a globalist/nationalist tension between the DFAT and Defence, one should also recognize the way in which policy was converging in favour of a strong regionalist orientation. It is also important to recognize the way in which Defence did give some attention to the wider international implications of Australian participation in peacekeeping.

In developing a rationale for its peacekeeping policy, the Labor government was influenced by its perception of key elements of international politics. At one level, there was a commitment to contribute to the capacity of the "international community", particularly in the form of the United Nations, to deal with major crises that arose (whether

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humanitarian or otherwise). The Labor government was also influenced by its alliance relationship with the United States, and its strong regional focus. Making a commitment to peacekeeping in certain circumstances could be a means for strengthening the alliance with the United States. It could also strengthen Australia's bargaining position in the event of Australia requiring support from the United States (in a peacekeeping operation or otherwise). The regional focus meant that Australia took a particular interest in situations in its immediate region where peacekeeping issues arose. At that level, it was more predisposed to contribute to peacekeeping operations in Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands than in regions farther afield. The Labor government was also interested in working with governments in the region to ensure that there could be a strong regional contribution to peacekeeping if the need should arise. Australia's position as a significant Commonwealth member could also be relevant in some situations. This was particularly the case in southern Africa. In the Pacific islands, Commonwealth membership overlapped with Australia's regional role.

The way in which the underlying rationale and the various influences worked in practice can be seen in the peacekeeping commitments undertaken by Australia during the period of the Labor government. The biggest overseas military commitment during that period was not to peacekeeping as such but to peace enforcement. Australia was an early supporter of the United States in the Gulf conflict that developed in August 1990 when Iraq occupied Kuwait (leading subsequently to the Gulf War of January–February 1991). Australia sent two frigates and a supply ship (one frigate was later replaced by a destroyer). The UN Security Council authorized action against Iraq under Resolution 678 of 29 November 1990. From the Australian perspective, this was an out-of-area operation in support of a U.S.-led coalition, acting with the authority of the UN, and in response to an act of interstate aggression in a key area. Alliance considerations were perhaps foremost but the importance of supporting the action as a UN-authorized operation should not be underestimated. From the perspective of the Department of Defence, there was an overlap with peacekeeping in the sense that the Persian Gulf was outside the area of immediate strategic concern to Australia. *Strategic Review 1993* refers to "multinational security operations" to cover both peace enforcement and peacekeeping.[15] Given the way in which expanded peacekeeping can come close to peace enforcement, it is relevant to consider the Gulf conflict as having implications for the Labor government's approach to peacekeeping.

Before the Gulf conflict, the most significant commitment by the Labor government at the very beginning of the post-Cold War era was to the peacekeeping operation in Namibia in 1989-90. This was essentially

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a traditional peacekeeping operation under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. The United Nations Transition Group (UNTAG) had the task of supervising the electoral arrangements to effect a transfer of power from South Africa to an independent Namibian government. Australia contributed about 300 military personnel, mainly engineers, out of a total force of about 4,650.[16] Australian involvement was related to the stance the Labor government had taken in relation to southern African issues, including opposition to the apartheid regime in South Africa. Australia's Commonwealth role would have been significant, as this had been a key context for dealing with southern African issues.

In terms of Australia's regional focus, the most significant involvement in peacekeeping during the Labor period was in relation to Cambodia. This covered 65 personnel involved in the UN Advance Mission in Cambodia in 1991–92, and over 500 personnel (out of 22,000) in the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).[17] UNTAC's role was to conduct elections and oversee the implementation of the agreement to bring an end to the Cambodian conflict. Australia's contribution to UNTAC included the provision of the commander for its military component (Lieutenant General John Sanderson). Australian participation in this operation brought together the globalist, nationalist and regionalist dimensions previously identified as significant in Australian approaches to peacekeeping. As Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans had been active in contributing to the diplomacy involved in trying to resolve the Cambodian conflict. Influenced by the Namibian model, he had proposed involving the UN in a transitional process leading to the formation of a government based on free elections. This proposal was subsequently taken up by the Permanent Five members of the Security Council and formed the basis for the agreement concluded by the Cambodian factions in August 1991. Given the involvement of Evans in the diplomacy of the Cambodian settlement, it was incumbent upon Australia to make a significant contribution to the UN force. Evans had been partly motivated by the concept of "good international citizenship" (globalism), but clearly the resolution of this issue was important for Southeast Asia (regionalism) and within a broad definition of Australia's region of strategic concern (nationalism). While Evans contributed significantly to the establishment of UNTAC at a diplomatic level, Sanderson's contribution as military commander has also been widely commended.[18]

Australian participation in peacekeeping operations in Somalia and Rwanda related more clearly to the globalist dimension of government thinking. In Somalia, Australia contributed 30 personnel to UNOSOM I (UN Operation in Somalia) from April 1992 to May 1993, and 38 personnel to UNOSOM II from May 1993 to November 1994.[19]

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UNOSOM I was designed to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance. UNOSOM II had a similar goal but put more emphasis on the need to establish a secure environment, and was authorized under Chapter VII. Lack of security had hampered UNOSOM I and led to the parallel introduction of the UNITAF (Unified Task Force in Somalia) as a UN-authorized and U.S.-led operation to restore security. UNITAF lasted from December 1992 to May 1993. The Australian contribution to UNITAF was a battalion of 950 troops and centred on Baidoa. Australia's involvement in UNOSOM I and II was small and intended as a contribution to deal with a humanitarian crisis. The contribution to UNITAF was more substantial. It too was relevant to the humanitarian crisis but was also related to alliance considerations. In his statement of 15 December 1992 announcing "the largest commitment of Australian ground forces overseas in the last 20 years", Prime Minister Paul Keating welcomed U.S. leadership in Somalia while also saying that Australia was "proud to take its place as part of [the] coalition to enforce and keep a just and humanitarian peace".[20]

In Rwanda, Australian involvement was even more clearly "globalist" and humanitarian in nature, given that the U.S. role was less significant than it had been in Somalia. In 1994, Australia contributed 308 personnel to the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR).[21] Lasting until the completion of UNAMIR in 1996, the Australian contingent provided "medical support for UN troops and humanitarian support for displaced persons".[22] This involvement accords well with the statement in the 1994 Defence White Paper that "the deployment of Defence contingents, usually as part of a wider national response, including aid operations and wherever possible non-governmental organisations, may be an appropriate response to help alleviate desperate humanitarian crises."[23]

In the light of the situations where Australia did become involved in peacekeeping under the Labor government, it is worth asking why Australia did not become involved in UN peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia, particularly Bosnia. At a humanitarian level, this was certainly a crisis that was well publicized in Australia. However, the Labor government took the view that this was an issue where the European powers should take the leading role. This was consistent with the early U.S. position. When the United States became more actively engaged, there was no strong pressure from it for Australia to become involved. In 1993, the government of John Major in the United Kingdom proposed that Australia should contribute to the peacekeeping operation.[24] The government of Paul Keating, unlike its New Zealand counterpart,[25] declined the invitation. An additional factor affecting Australian reluctance was a belief that its involvement might exacerbate

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tensions among the different communities from former Yugoslavia in Australia.

Overall, the impact of Australian involvement in peacekeeping operations during the Labor period was consistent with the proposition that the involvement in itself was not decisive in the outcome of any of the situations under review. Australia maintained its status as a reliable contributor to such operations. Its involvement gave substance to Australia's claim to be a "good international citizen". In the case of Cambodia, an argument might be put forward that Australian involvement was more significant. This was the largest Australian commitment among the various Australian peacekeeping operations; its role in communications made a vital contribution to UNTAC, and Australia also provided the military commander for the whole operation. The size of the Australian commitment to UNTAC underlines the way in which the regionalist dimension strengthened the other arguments that were put forward for Australian involvement. However, even in the case of Cambodia, the Australian commitment was only significant as part of a coalition. In relative terms, it was more important than the other operations but not decisive in itself.

The Coalition Period, 1996–

The period under the conservative Coalition government since 1996 represents a second phase in Australia's involvement in post-Cold War peacekeeping. The rationale for the Australian approach during this period has continued many of the themes that emerged during the Labor period but with important differences. Perhaps the major change is that there has been less emphasis on the "globalist" dimension in Australian thinking, and relatively more emphasis on "nationalist" and "regionalist" considerations. Of course, one could argue that this impression derives from the fact that there has not been significant pressure on Australia to contribute to peacekeeping operations outside its immediate region (Australian forces took part in the war in Afghanistan from late 2001 but did not contribute to peacekeeping). If situations such as those prevailing in Somalia and Rwanda in the early 1990s had arisen under the period of the Coalition government, then it is highly likely that Australia would still have become involved. Even so, Coalition rhetoric puts far less emphasis on internationalism and the globalist approach than had been the case with Gareth Evans under the Labor government. While the influences emanating from the defence and foreign policy bureaucracy are broadly similar to what they had been under the Labor government, both Prime Minister John Howard and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer have emphasized pragmatism

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as the hallmark of Australian policy. Ironically, for all the suggestions that Australian involvement in peacekeeping after 1996 would be more low key than had previously been the case, the Coalition has presided over the biggest Australian peacekeeping operation of all: the intervention in East Timor in 1999 under INTERFET (International Force East Timor), followed by a leading role in the military component of UNTAET (UN Transitional Administration in East Timor) between 2000 and 2002 (with Australia also contributing to post-UNTAET arrangements). In assessing Australia's peacekeeping role under the Coalition, clearly one needs to put a major emphasis on the East Timor intervention.

As with the Labor government, an important source for examining the underlying rationale for Australian involvement in peacekeeping during the Coalition period is the various defence and foreign policy statements. A starting point is to consider the defence and foreign policy statements of 1997. The positions on peacekeeping presented in these statements need to be placed in the context of the various domestic and international influences affecting Australian policy towards peacekeeping during the period of the Coalition. Particular attention needs to be given to the Australian experience of peacekeeping in East Timor. This has had a major effect on the approach of the Coalition government to peacekeeping, as reflected in the Defence White Paper of 2000.

The defence statement of 1997, entitled *Australia's Strategic Policy*, emphasized the way in which Australia had become involved in some situations because of "humanitarian interests", while also drawing attention to the interest Australia had "in being seen as a responsible international player".[26] Based on ADF involvement in peacekeeping operations over nearly a decade, the statement provided a checklist of points that should be considered when assessing whether Australia should make a commitment to a particular operation.[27] Some of these points were more broadly political, while others focused more on the operational aspect. The "political" points included assessing "what Australian interests are engaged, including regional, alliance and humanitarian interests and community attitudes". There was also a need to assess "whether the operation has a clear and achievable mandate, clear and achievable goals and clearly-defined termination and review points", and "whether there is a prospect for a satisfactory outcome". The more specific concerns of the Defence Department were whether sufficient resources were likely to be available, the costs in terms of the ADF's capacity to provide for national defence, whether other operations were being undertaken, and any training benefits and risks to personnel. As with the White Papers issued under the Labor

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government, the point was made that special training for peacekeeping was not necessary: "The best preparation for peacekeeping is conventional military capabilities and training, supplemented by specific familiarisation with the tasks required in individual operations."[28]

In the National Interest, the 1997 White Paper on foreign policy, gave less attention to peacekeeping than was the case with the defence statement. This suggested that peacekeeping as part of Australia's broad foreign policy strategy was not ranked highly. The report discusses Australia's "international reputation" as a means of enhancing Australian influence. Among other things, this reputation is based on a readiness "to assist in cases of humanitarian need".[29] While clearly not anticipating the developments that were to occur two years hence, the report referred to the need "to encourage the protection of human rights and an internationally acceptable solution to the problem of East Timor".[30] At that stage, it was envisaged that such a solution would be achieved in the context of East Timor continuing as a province of Indonesia (its status from the Australian as well as the Indonesian perspective). However, the attention given to East Timor indicated that it was an important issue for Australian foreign policy. Similarly, in relation to Papua New Guinea, the report spoke of "encouraging and supporting the PNG Government in the pursuit of a peaceful resolution of the Bougainville conflict".[31] Peacekeeping was not an issue in either East Timor or Bougainville in 1997, but these were regional situations of direct interest to Australia; future Australian involvement could clearly take a range of forms.

While the defence and foreign policy statements of 1997 give a general indication of the attitudes prevailing within the Coalition government in its initial phase, it is also important to consider the broad range of influences that affected the policies of that government towards peacekeeping. The major difference, compared with the Labor period, is that different ministers were involved and they came from different party traditions. The role of the foreign policy and defence bureaucracy was largely a continuation of what had prevailed under Labor, as were the international influences emanating from the alliance with the United States and Australia's various regional relationships. However, Prime Minister John Howard saw himself as less ideologically motivated in relation to foreign policy than had been the Labor government. By this, he meant that he did not have a grand design for Australian engagement with Asia. Howard and Foreign Minister Downer regarded themselves as pragmatists in foreign policy. While they were critics of Labor's regional project, they were prepared to focus on issues within Australia's region that they believed were directly relevant to Australian interests.[32] The Coalition parties were traditionally more

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sceptical of the role of the United Nations, but were pragmatic enough to make use of the UN where they perceived it as having a useful role. The Coalition put less emphasis on moral considerations in foreign policy than was the case with its predecessor, but this is not to say that the government did not allow some role for such considerations within the broader remit of its focus on national interests.

East Timor in 1999 was the situation where the underlying assumptions within the Coalition towards peacekeeping were put to the test. This crisis arose in the aftermath of an overwhelming vote on 30 August 1999 in favour of independence in East Timor. Pro-Indonesian militias, supported by the Indonesian military (TNI) in East Timor, embarked on a campaign of destruction and violence to try to undermine the result. A large proportion of East Timorese fled into the hills or into West Timor; many (possibly thousands) were killed. Would the international community take effective action to uphold the will of the East Timorese as expressed in their vote, or would it simply accept what was occurring?

The Coalition government in Australia took the lead in deciding that the answer to this question would be in the affirmative. From the Coalition's perspective, the issue was not so much peacekeeping policy as such but how to deal with a situation that was directly relevant to Australia's own security. It was influenced by the public outcry against the death and destruction being wrought in East Timor.[33] There had long been support for East Timorese independence by various groups within Australia, including human rights groups, significant elements within the Catholic Church, and the East Timorese immigrant community. However, the efforts of these groups had been insufficient to overcome the dominant view within government (whether Labor or Coalition) that Indonesia's strategic importance to Australia necessitated support for East Timor's incorporation into Indonesia. According to this view, human rights in East Timor should be supported, but on the assumption that the territory would continue as a province of Indonesia. The Howard government saw the 1999 consultation as a means of resolving the East Timor conflict. While not an official Australian policy as such, it is clear that a vote in favour of autonomy would have been more consistent with the position Australia had adopted in the past. Public pressure made the Coalition government put more emphasis on the moral issues at stake in East Timor. Not to act would have been to accept the use of force to negate the democratically expressed wishes of the East Timorese people.

John Howard saw the moral dimension of Australian intervention in terms of the influence of "Australian values". The East Timor crisis, in his view, showed that "foreign policy needs to be based on a clear

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sense of the national interest and on our values ... national interest cannot be pursued without regard to the values of the Australian community".[34] In the early phase of INTERFET, Howard spoke of "defending the values we hold as Australians. We were willing to be in dispute with our nearest neighbour, to defend those values. And we were able to build on our associations with nations outside of Asia in the course of that."[35] At no point did he speak of Australia acting as a "good international citizen".

Perceptions of "nationalism" and "regionalism" were important influences on Australian policy. "Nationalism" was reflected not just in the statements about "Australian values" but in the view that Australia needed to be active in dealing with a crisis so close to its own territory. "Regionalism" suggested that Australian involvement in peacekeeping should give priority to Australia's immediate region, and East Timor was clearly within that definition.

Regional factors were important in determining how Australia dealt with the crisis. Australia worked to win Indonesian approval for UN-authorized intervention in East Timor. It was also active in encouraging Asian countries to contribute to INTERFET. Thailand, the Philippines, and South Korea made the most significant contributions, with Singapore and Malaysia having more minor roles. These countries continued as contributors to the military component of UNTAET. Australia was influenced by its relationship with the United States. As previously noted, there is a U.S. expectation that Australia will take a leading role in dealing with issues in maritime Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands. The United States, as a global power, sees itself as taking a lead in relation to "global" issues, while regional allies or partners are at the fore in terms of "regional" issues. The United States saw East Timor as one such regional issue. Howard did not actually use the term "deputy sheriff" himself (this was a journalistic invention), but certainly saw the East Timor intervention as part of a co-operative relationship with the United States.[36]

While these various assumptions and influences contributed to the Coalition government's decision that Australia should take the lead in organizing INTERFET as a UN-authorized intervention in East Timor, considerable diplomatic activity was required in putting the operation together. It is not the purpose of this article to analyse this aspect in detail, but this activity does highlight the way in which assumptions and influences are just a starting point. More specific political steps are necessary before a peacekeeping operation is realized. Australia would not have intervened without Indonesian consent, but could not apply sufficient pressure on its own. The United States was in a much stronger position to do this and did so (using its influence in relation to the

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International Monetary Fund "rescue" of Indonesia, and its ability to restrict the supply of spare parts for weapons and equipment to the TNI as bargaining points). Australia was able to make use of the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation) meeting in Auckland from 11 to 12 September 1999 as a means of winning support from the most significant regional leaders (Robin Cook, the British Foreign Secretary, also attended). The United Kingdom was particularly helpful to Australia in winning the support of the UN Security Council. Further diplomacy was required in relation to the ASEAN countries. On the military side, Australia had to ensure that INTERFET was not only well based politically but could also perform adequately the range of tasks required in "expanded peacekeeping".

East Timor has been the single most important involvement by Australia in peacekeeping in the entire post-Cold War era. Under the Coalition, Australia has also been involved in two operations in the Southwest Pacific, one in Bougainville and the other in the Solomon Islands. These operations do not involve major commitments of military personnel but are essentially small-scale peace facilitating missions. In the case of Bougainville, unarmed Australian military personnel have been part of a Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) since 1997. This is intended to assist the implementation of the Burnham Accords between the Papua New Guinea government and the independence movement on Bougainville. The PMG remained on Bougainville to assist in the implementation of an agreement finally approved in early 2002 that provided for autonomy for the province and a referendum on independence in 10–15 years. In the Solomon Islands, Australia contributed unarmed personnel to an International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) sent to the country to help implement the Townsville Peace Agreement of October 2000; this was an attempt to deal with the conflict most clearly manifested in the coup of June 2000. The IPMT contributed to the reduction of ethnic violence while not eliminating lawlessness as such; it came to an end in June 2002.[37] Neither the Bougainville nor Solomons involvements was UN-authorized. The outside groups have been present with the consent of the parties concerned. Australian involvement has been motivated by a concern to contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Australia's immediate region. It is also influenced by an expectation by the United States and other Western countries that Australia will play a leading role in dealing with situations in the Southwest Pacific, broadly defined.

In assessing the impact of Australian involvement in peacekeeping under the Coalition, the focus is on East Timor. Without Australia taking the leading role, it is unlikely that international intervention

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would have occurred. The Indonesian-orchestrated campaign of destruction might have led to Indonesian rule being perpetuated in some form even though it would have had even less legitimacy than had previously been the case. Australian intervention was therefore decisive in ensuring that an independent East Timor would emerge. In intervening in East Timor, the Coalition government broke radically with the policies that had prevailed previously. While the Indonesian relationship remained important to Australia, it would not necessarily be given first priority when other issues involving strategic, economic, or moral considerations arose. Nevertheless, rebuilding the relationship with Indonesia would be a difficult task, particularly given that many Indonesians saw the East Timor intervention as an instance of Australian imperialism. Howard's talk of "projecting Australian values" fed this suspicion. On the other hand, it could be argued that Australia assisted Indonesia in removing the "pebble in [its] shoe" (a phrase used by former Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas to describe East Timor), so that Indonesia could concentrate on dealing with the many other issues that it confronted. Suspicion of Australia in the aftermath of the East Timor intervention might have affected Australian relations with other Southeast Asian countries, particularly Malaysia. In general, however, it did not constitute a major impediment. East Timor became part of a constructive Australian relationship with countries such as Thailand and the Philippines. With East Timor achieving independence in May 2002, Australia will be a major influence on the new state's future direction, but particularly in relation to security and economic development.

At a more general level, Australia's role in the East Timor intervention enhanced Australia's reputation as a "responsible member of the international community". As with other peacekeeping operations, both INTERFET and UNTAET were based on coalitions, but in this instance, Australia assumed the leading role. In earlier operations, Australia had normally been one contributor among many, but without playing the decisive role that it did in East Timor. Australian leadership in East Timor enhanced its relationship with the United States. U.S. leaders cited the East Timor intervention as a model for peacekeeping operations. From the U.S. perspective, Australia acted as a regional ally and partner of the United States in assuming the leadership of the operation, while the latter provided diplomatic support and operational backup.

The Defence White Paper of 2000 reflected the Australian experience in East Timor. While the first priority for the ADF was "the defence of Australia", the second was "contributing to the security of our immediate

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neighbourhood", and the third was "supporting Australia's wider interests and objectives by being able to contribute effectively to international coalitions of forces to meet crises beyond our immediate neighbourhood".[38] Peacekeeping was specifically mentioned under the second priority as being among the lower level operations that were most likely in the immediate neighbourhood. The third priority could include coalition operations "ranging from peacekeeping and disaster relief to relatively high-intensity conflict".[39]

The 2000 White Paper argued that in contributing to lower-level operations in Australia's immediate neighbourhood, "the capabilities we develop in the ADF for defending Australia provide forces appropriate for these tasks".[40] However, it did recognize that "strong demands [were placed] on some elements of the ADF, especially our land forces, logistics capacity and deployment capabilities." The Paper spelt out the implications in terms of the need for specific training, high levels of readiness and capacity for sustainment, adequate means of deployment and support, ample firepower and mobility, and the ability to deal with a more demanding situation in command and communications.[41] At a political level, the relevant criteria for assessing whether Australia should use its armed forces in lower level regional crises were similar to what had been stated in the 1997 defence statement. The first priority was to assess "the nature and extent of Australia's interests, including strategic, political, humanitarian and alliance issues". It was necessary "to recognize that the use of armed forces is not always a useful or practical response to a crisis".[42]

In terms of the third priority of "supporting wider interests", the expectation of the White Paper was that Australia would "make a greater contribution to coalition operations closer to home". In Southeast Asia, the contribution would be "substantial", in the wider Asia-Pacific (where the United States would most likely lead a coalition) it would be "significant", and beyond the Asia-Pacific (in a wider UN or U.S.-led coalition) it would be "relatively modest".[43] The political criteria for assessing whether Australia should contribute to an operation in the immediate neighbourhood were also relevant to this priority. While air and naval forces developed for the defence of Australia would be relevant to high intensity operations, Australian land forces "would be ideally suited to provide contributions to lower intensity operations including peace-enforcement, peacekeeping and many types of humanitarian operations."[44]

The 2000 White Paper gives a clear indication of how thinking within the Coalition government about peacekeeping has been affected by the East Timor experience. While the ADF is prepared for a broad

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range of contingencies relating to Australian security, peacekeeping is what it has become most involved in at a practical level.

Conclusion

Comparing Australian approaches to peacekeeping under the Labor and Coalition governments, we can see how certain trends that were emerging before 1996 have been taken further in the more recent period. At the same time, the Coalition has given its own stamp to the peacekeeping issue. Under Labor, the themes of "globalism", "nationalism" and "regionalism" were all relevant in the approach to peacekeeping, with "regionalism" becoming increasingly important. Cambodia was the main example. Under the Coalition, "globalism" has become relatively less important, and "regionalism" and "nationalism" have become correspondingly more important. This is partly attributable to Gareth Evans, with his particular moral and intellectual concerns, no longer being Foreign Minister. Alexander Downer and John Howard have put more emphasis on what they see as "pragmatism". Beyond the role of particular ministers, there is also the fact that the position taken by Australian governments, whether Coalition or Labor, is affected by the issues that arise. The trend towards regionalism in Labor's peacekeeping policy was related to the way in which the Cambodian conflict was resolved. Even more so, the Coalition was faced with the East Timor crisis and the question of how it should respond. Similarly, while Australia generally played a role as a coalition partner in the peacekeeping operations occurring under Labor and did not have a decisive impact in its own right, the situation was different with the Coalition government because of East Timor. In this case, as we have seen, Australia took the lead and did have a major impact.

In the future one can expect issues relating to peacekeeping to continue as an important aspect of international politics. The themes of "globalism", "nationalism" and "regionalism" will continue to underpin Australian approaches, irrespective of the government in office. "Nationalism" and "regionalism" are likely to be more important than "globalism". The Labor government had given more attention to "globalism" than has the Coalition but in practice the differences are less than the rhetoric might suggest. The policies adopted by Australian governments towards peacekeeping issues are not simply the outcome of the perceptions prevailing within those governments but are also affected by important international factors. The most significant of these are the regional developments affecting Australia, the position adopted by the United States, and the role played by the United Nations.

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NOTES

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Book Reviews

Pacific Asia? Prospects for Security and Cooperation in East Asia. **By Mel Gurtov.** New York: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002. 259pp.

The main title of this packed and densely footnoted but still very readable book ends with a question mark, which intrigues the reader to ponder the extent to which post-Cold War Pacific Asia is really "pacific". Indisputably, the Cold War's ending has been a critical defining moment in major power relations but the effects of that transformation in the political and security domains have yet to be fully realized in East Asia where a divided Korean peninsula (the most heavily militarized area of Pacific Asia) and the 100,000 American "forward" troops deployed there and in Japanese bases are constant reminders of the un-ended business of a previous strategic era. Add to that the U.S.–China–Taiwan imbroglio, the unresolved issue of sovereignty over the South China Sea, questions over a future Japanese security role and disturbing trends in weapons acquisitions by regional states and the East Asian strategic environment begins to look less sanguine.

Nevertheless, the Cold War's demise has opened the way for multilateral confidence- building and conflict management processes that are uniquely "Asian" and distinguishable by its "emphasis on informal arrangements rather than institution-building to solve inter-governmental problems and gain co-operation ... by the belief that where security cooperation may not be directly attainable, economic development through interdependence is ... and by reliance on reassurances through dialogue rather than rule making in regimes and agreements to resolve or mitigate disputes" (p. 62). Coupled with the

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general improvement in major power relations, they make for a strategic landscape that is more stable than it was during the Cold War. However, it has also become more complex and uncertain. These uncertainties were most starkly re-emphasized by the onset in 1997 of the East Asian economic crisis, the consequences of which on the economy and development, the environment, regime instability (and attendant effects on the foreign policy environment), and the flow of displaced peoples across borders, constitute a major security concern of the book. Such threats to human security, which could not be addressed adequately by either the Realist or Globalist paradigms — given what Gurtov sees as the pessimism of power politics associated with the former and the quest for profit associated with the latter — led him to prescribe in the critical perspective of what he calls "global humanism", which redefines security needs in terms of advancing human values and policies, namely, those fostering "peace, social justice, environmental protection and economic balance, political liberties and accountable institutions" (p. ix).

This is not to suggest, however, that the author eschews the Realist or the Globalist framework in his analysis of China's ambitions, Japan's quest for "normalcy" in its international role, and mutual security between a divided Korea — the themes that constitute the core of the book (chps. 4–6). On the contrary, Gurtov views each of these issues through both prisms but concludes that the best way of coping with a rising China, encouraging Japan to play its role as "a global civilian power", or underpinning stability in the Korean peninsula is through a "global humanism" approach that emphasizes a common rather than a unilateral search for security. In what is by far the longest chapter in the book (chp. 4), Gurtov rightly identifies the Sino-American security relationship as the most important element in the wider security of East Asia. But how should a rising China be handled by the sole superpower of today? Not on the presumption that a strong China will be aggressive, "nor by seeking to weaken China through balance-of-power tactics, but rather by helping provide China with the means of securing people's livelihoods and protecting its resource base — in short, helping to refocus its security agenda by ways that also promote regional security"(p. 124). What is lacking in the treatment of this "rising China" is a deeper analysis of the security challenges for others in the region as China acquires more "soft" power elements and capabilities. An economically strong China is not only an opportunity to others but also a possible threat in terms of its trade and investment diversion potentials. In this respect, perhaps the "ASEAN+3" dialogues as well as the proposed ASEAN–China free trade pact are arrangements and

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mechanisms for economic confidence-building as much as they serve to advance mutual economic interests.

Gurtov's analysis of the interactive dimension of major power politics does not lose sight of the domestic and cultural environments that both shape and circumscribe foreign policy behaviour. This is underlined in his reflections on Japan's role as a global civilian power. Indeed, he echoes the view attributed to Michael J. Green that such a power that rejects militarization "defies international relations theory, and particularly the neo-realist perspective". Whether this seeming anomaly can be sustained would depend on the extent of Japanese societal changes — the extent to which public participation is registered upon policy-making, the pervasiveness of democratic norms on the bureaucratic process, domestic economic restructuring, and whether Japanese society itself can become less homogeneous (p. 154). The author makes the admittedly contentious point that "what really stands in Japan's way is Japan itself" (p. 155). It is in the Korean peninsula that the neo-realist paradigm remains most pertinent. Here, all four major external powers (namely, China, Japan, the United States, and Russia), whose strategic interests converge, seem to find commonalities in the avoidance of another war, keeping the area nuclear-free and according low priority to Korean unification, although they probably regard such a prospect as inevitable (p. 167). This, together with the general acceptance (including, interestingly, by Kim Jong Il) of a residual American role in providing strategic stability on the peninsula now and after unification (p. 166), gives hopeful optimism for multilateral efforts at security management.

While the Korean peninsula may, up to a point, be more amenable to security management among the major external powers, the question remains whether the United States itself, the sole superpower — indeed, the post-Cold War hegemonic (yet others would call "exceptional") power, with its unique web of historical bilateral security alliances and less formal, but nevertheless special, security partnerships in East Asia — is paying only lip-service to multilateralism. To Gurtov, however, despite the many sources of friction in the region, regional governments remain attracted to the idea of resolving disputes and promoting collaboration through regional dialogues. What the United States itself needs "most of all (is) to be a partner with Asia-Pacific states, not a balancer or military ally" (p. 203). This would seem to give hope for those inspired by the multilateral approach to security. One policy implication is that the U.S. strategic predominance is neither to be taken for granted nor necessarily desirable. However, for a hegemonic power, the challenge would lie in striking a balance between the impulse

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to lead and going with company. Nowhere is this more challenging than in America's efforts at coalition-building in the war against global terrorism following the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States — the significance of which, for East Asian security, was just beginning to sink in at the time the book went to press. There are brief references to the impact on and implications for U.S. security policy towards the region. Indeed, the index contains only three entries under "war on terrorism". Today, one would expect the spectre of global terrorism to hang heavily over the regional security discourse. More importantly, the current war on terrorism also raises serious questions over the heavy American emphasis on military response as well as Washington's management of its relations with the moderate Islamic constituencies, particularly in Southeast Asia. This is not to suggest, however, that another "defining moment" in history has overtaken the book, although the author himself recognizes the hazard of writing about foreign and security policy in East Asia. As he says in the Preface, "changes come with such frequency and, often, unpredictability that one week's writing is next week's garbage" (p. ix). The main underlying injunction of the book, to think "comprehensively" about the human dimensions of security, is as relevant as ever in the war on terrorism. Above all, the collaborative effort at meeting this new threat (as well as responding to the previous challenge of the East Asian economic and financial crises) also puts into perspective the so-called softer "Asian way" to managing security. The question for security planners who would prefer a more robust co-operative response must be: if the Asian way is necessary, is it quite enough?

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The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. **Edited by Robert W. Hefner.** Honolulu, Hawaii, USA: University of Hawaii Press, 2002. 319pp.

Southeast Asia has long been noted for its ethnic and religious pluralism. While studies since the colonial era have commonly focused on state policies to build coherent, stable nations out of this diversity, the contributors to this volume consider pluralism from the perspective of non-state or sub-state actors. In considering how actors from four social

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fields — religious organizations, business and labour, locally-based non-governmental organizations (including the arts community), and political organizations — contribute to political culture in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, this volume makes a valuable contribution to the literature on the changing shape and significance of pluralism in state and society.

The volume comes out of a Ford Foundation-sponsored research and training project from 1998 to 2000. The duration and iterative approach of the project is reflected in how polished the individual chapters are, even if all do not address the central themes of the volume equally well. The approach is qualitative and many of the chapters rely upon an impressive array of interviews and other data. Hefner presents an introductory chapter laying out the premise and background for the volume, followed by five chapters on Malaysia, two on Singapore, and four on Indonesia, arranged more or less thematically. The uneven attention to the three countries and somewhat obscure ordering of chapters, as well as a few misstated names and typographical errors, are minor quibbles in an otherwise quite coherent volume.

Hefner frames the project as growing out of the enduring pessimism on whether democracy is possible in plural societies. He asserts a need to explore the heterogeneity of civil society and consider whether and how associations are shifting away from old lines of cleavage and towards universal citizenship. Hefner offers a review of relevant pre-colonial characteristics and colonial developments (crucial to crystallizing a system of ethno-religious segregation), then considers the impact of post-colonial policies to develop nations and markets on the colonial pluralist legacy. As Hefner describes, the differing nation-building challenges and ethno-religious balances of the three countries in question have resulted in the emergence of different core cleavages and state attempts to manage or mitigate diversity. It also argues that civil society not only provides space for self-organization and voluntarism, but also contributes to changes in political culture, including ideas and practices of citizenship, group, and individual rights, and participation in the public sphere.

On Malaysia, Abdul Rahman Embong presents the "big picture", and the other authors home-in on particular sectors. Abdul Rahman's main point — which he and others have made before — is that the growth of a new middle class among both Chinese and Malays since the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971 has fostered greater cross-ethnic interaction and accommodation amidst both material and ideational changes. Importantly, Abdul Rahman discusses not just market-based interactions and their influence on ideas and behaviour, but also such factors as the increasingly inclusive language used by

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dakwah groups, Islamic parties, and its effect on non-Muslims' perceptions of them, as well as the countervailing impact of competition among élites of different ethnic groups. Abdul Rahman also makes an effort to extend his analysis beyond the usual discussion of peninsular Malays and Chinese, giving a truncated but useful overview of where Siamese and *orang asli* fit into Malaysia's shifting pluralist framework.

The chapter by Shamsul A.B. picks up on some of Abdul Rahman's points, detailing a shift away from the colonial legacy of racial and religious categories and towards "interest-based" concerns, including a focus on social justice and inter-civilizational dialogue, and the increased pluralization of the public sphere. The new politics remained fragmented by cause and along the lines of old ethnic and class cleavages throughout 1997. Then, with the sacking of Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and the launch of the *Reformasi* movement, these fragments were united and the new politics moved towards the centre and became entrenched — although the more recent dissolution of the opposition coalition and the rise in the ruling National Front's fortunes suggest that Shamsul may have been overly optimistic in making his case.

The chapters by Sumit Mandal, Francis Loh Kok Wah, and Zainah Anwar fill in the details. Mandal investigates the role of the arts community in producing and representing political culture, comparing across generations and subgroups to see how perspectives vary with history, personal experiences, and memory. He finds that the older, prewar generation is generally ethnicist or pragmatic in orientation; the *Merdeka* generation (born around the time of Malaysia's independence in 1957) is inclined to work together co-operatively; and the NEP (New Economic Policy) generation (born between 1969 and 1975) is critical of ethnicism, seeing possibilities in pluralism. Members of the arts community present alternative views of Malaysian society and history, as through theatre and literature, and seek to remake political culture by challenging the *status quo*.

Loh examines how changes in political culture are reflected in and reinforced by the appeals and actions of elected representatives, or *wakil rakyat*. He scrutinizes a predominantly Chinese parliamentary constituency in Penang and the three state seats it encompasses. All four representatives are from parties in the ruling Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition. Loh concludes that a decline in ethnicism does not necessarily entail its replacement by democratic discourse. Rather, it is developmentalism that has taken hold among both Malays and, more recently, Chinese. The consolidation of a political culture of developmentalism, in which the emphasis on receiving amenities and services from *wakil rakyat* rather than on the social and political problems of the people, or broadening participation in decision-making,

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has actually posed limits to the counter-discourse of democracy, despite cultural liberalization in the 1990s.

Zainah also explores a very specific niche in her study, but makes less of a clear link between developments in this one sector and the polity at large. Zainah focuses on the case of Sisters in Islam, a small but vocal group that has challenged the injustices against women, brought about by the rise of a conservative strand of Islam. The group seeks to counter a perceived trend towards inequality and undemocratic change. The chapter that follows Zainah's, by Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin, completes the argument. Siti Ruhaini examines the place of women in modern Indonesian political culture. She supplements her empirical argument with a useful review of how gender can be situated within a discourse on pluralism: women's activism (such as that of Sisters in Islam) contests the hegemonic ideology, power, and influence of men in a patriarchal order, forcing a rethinking of categories presumed essential, and acknowledging women's rights and status as citizens. All the same, despite the chance for a revision of notions of gender presented by the *Reformasi* movement, Siti Ruhaini finds that even relatively well-educated women are generally reluctant to talk about or engage in politics.

The other chapters on Indonesia are also comparatively narrow in focus, though as a whole they cover much ground and present unusual and worthwhile angles on the questions at hand. Mohtar Mas'oed, S. Rizal Panggabean, and Muhammad Najib Azca examine the role of Yogyakarta's dynamic sultans, Hamengku Buwono IX and X, in fostering a more dynamic, tolerant, open political culture since the 1940s. They discuss discourses and practices of citizenship in Yogyakarta in four spheres — religion, civic organizations, politics, and business — to highlight how the discourse of civility of the 1970s and 1980s paved the way for mobilization around more pluralistic politics in the 1990s. An interesting question left hanging in their account, suggested by the contrast with the chapters by Rahman Embong and Shamsul A.B., is why business has not developed in such a pluralist direction as the other spheres have.

Vedi Hadiz considers the shifting cleavages in Indonesia's labour movement, and particularly, the remarkable absence of inter-religious hostility in the movement in the 1990s. (A comparable chapter on Malaysian workers might have been a useful contribution.) Hadiz suggests that the recent establishment of religious-oriented labour unions is partly due to state élites' strategies of selective mobilization, but that, in fact, labour has not gained significant access to state power and is not a strong or coherent enough force for any major party or group of élites to seek to co-opt more systematically. The chapter is particularly

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relevant to the volume for its tracing of cleavages of class, religion, and ideology and how pluralism plays out in the labour movement and in different political climates. Hermawan Sulistiyo addresses some of the same issues in his discussion of ethno-religious divisions in the Indonesian armed forces. Military training by the Dutch, then Japanese, developed a corps of officers with a sense of common identity, despite their varying backgrounds. Later, factionalism and inter-élite rivalries, whether among the armed forces, communists, Muslim organizations, and Soekarno in the 1960s, or between "green" (Muslim) and "red-and-white" (nationalist) officers in the 1990s, revealed the dangers of ethno-religious sentiments in the armed forces, and sparked a series of policies to erode such loyalties. More recently, the most significant divide in the military has been between pro-*status quo* and reformist forces. All the same, internal policies such as the maintenance of meritocracy and external goals, such as upholding national unity, reflect the armed forces' pluralist vision.

Finally, Singapore receives less space in the volume than the other countries, but the chapters by both Chua Beng Huat and Kwok Kian-Woon, and by Sharon Siddique, are excellent and especially well-tailored to the overriding concerns of the volume. Like Abdul Rahman on Malaysia, but more comprehensively, Chua and Kwok consider the broad sweep of Singapore society, studying an unusual but apt set of segments within the public sphere: the theatre community, voluntary welfare organizations, women's organizations, and feminist voices, the Muslim and Tamil communities, Christian and Buddhist groups, Chinese-educated intellectuals, the gay voice, "the working committee" of young civil society activists, and the Roundtable (a political commentary group). What is particularly interesting about this set of segments is that Chua and Kwok consider pluralism from various dimensions, and take no set of cleavages for granted. Some of these sectors are defined by race or religion, others by gender, others by economic or cultural function. They find that Singaporean society is less blindly consumerist and politically acquiescent than often presumed, with the desire for individuality and availability of resources to achieve it increasingly evident since the late 1980s. The authors document a panoply of voices and processes of social differentiation behind the façade of People's Action Party (PAP) hegemony. Ultimately, however, they conclude that the prospects for democratization remain "rather bleak", at least in the medium term, despite increasing tolerance for diversity in individuals' choices at the level of the political culture of everyday life.

In evaluating the development of the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP), Siddique further elucidates why political

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liberalization seems unlikely in Singapore. She describes a model of "corporate pluralism" (concordant with, for instance, the stance of the voluntary welfare organizations that Chua and Kwok describe) in which Singapore Inc. is geared as a whole towards maximum efficiency and competitiveness, as reflected in the common worldview of the state and its "subsidiary", the AMP. As long as the majority of Singaporeans find the present "management" to be in their economic best interests, they will continue to support it. However, that management must continually reinvent itself and modify its strategies to sustain popular support. In short, pluralism is a positive force for requiring Singapore to be dynamic and inclusive.

Overall, these contributions suggest that the nature, political impact, and social significance of pluralism has been changing in all three countries. Most notably, the salience of particular lines of cleavage has shifted, with ethnicity, religion, gender, generation, and other categories jostling for influence or integration. This volume makes a noteworthy attempt to describe and spark further reflection on the shape and practice of multiculturalism in contemporary Southeast Asia, without losing sight of the historical roots of the present order.

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Fear and Sanctuary: Burmese Refugees in Thailand. **By Hazel J. Lang.** Ithaca, New York, USA: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2002. 240 pp.

Despite a 1995 ceasefire agreement between Burma's SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council) and the New Mon State Party (one of several ethnic separatist groups), the deep-seated problems that have caused massive civilian displacement still linger, argues Hazel J. Lang in *Fear and Sanctuary: Burmese Refugees in Thailand.* In a broad, interdisciplinary study, Lang addresses the historical, political, and economic circumstances surrounding the predicament of Burmese refugees along and within the Thai border. Specifically, the work explores the nature and causes of refugee displacement in Burma while investigating the ways in which these communities have adjusted to and been affected by the shifting geopolitical circumstances of the

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border region. Through a wide variety of sources, Lang demonstrates that a relatively uncontrollable degree of ambiguity has arisen with regard to the definition and recognition of refugee status, boundary, and sanctuary in the region. In fact, it is precisely this flexibility at the borders, this "blurring" of identity, sovereignty, and jurisdiction at the local, state, and international levels that has compounded the underlying historical, political, and ideological issues that are at the heart of the refugee problem. Although diplomatic co-operation between the governments of Burma and Thailand continues to improve, and while ceasefire agreements have temporarily reduced the intensity of the conflict, *Fear and Sanctuary* argues that no fundamental change in this post-colonial predicament is recognizable until an approach espousing "human security" is adopted.

While the problem is very much an ongoing fissure in the region, the deep context of the current refugee crisis must be considered within the historical legacy of ethnic politics that arose out of British colonialism, nationalism, and the eventual post-independence struggle for power. In the concise survey of pre-colonial and colonial forms of representation and communal interaction in Chapter Two, Lang admits that pre-modern cultural integration and homogenization occurred primarily through patron–client relationships, regional affinities, and religious acculturation — a gradual process that began during the classical Pagan period and continued into the early-modern Konbaung dynasty. In contrast, contemporary notions of ethnicity, which were derived from colonial administrative ideas and anti-colonial sentiment, were now being employed in domestic politics to define and preserve minority interests in the wake of what was being perceived as "Burmanization". Initiatives towards administrative centralization were thus viewed along ethnic lines, which in turn conflicted with efforts to secure political autonomy by minority communities, creating the political dilemma that hinders reconciliation today. Lang addresses the nature of this refugee problem from essentially two perspectives: an "internal" view through the case of the Mons, and "externally" from the perspective of the Thais, who serve as the host country. This approach shows how local conditions and concerns intersect with national, regional, and international interests, thereby illustrating the complexities involved in the problem as well as in formulating viable solutions.

Chapter Three addresses the causes for displacement as the raiding of villages, the coercive demand for "fees" from villagers, the requisition of labour, and the forced relocation of villages. Lang constructs the extent to which these tactics "create" refugees and provides analysis on the repercussions for the communities caught in the crossfire. The alleged atrocities, the association of civilian populations with the

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insurgency movements, and the inability to conduct everyday life in a "secure" environment, has facilitated large-scale migrations across the Thai border in search of sanctuary, the nature of which is examined thoroughly in Chapter Four.

Extending the question of Thailand as a sanctuary to both Indochinese and Burmese refugees, Lang juxtaposes the different approaches to refugee hosting by the Thai Government and draws attention to the impact of Cold War politics on refugee policy and practice. In brief, Lang shows that for much of the seventies and early eighties, Burmese refugee camps were overshadowed by the influx of Indochinese refugees, who were fleeing the violence and dislocation of the Vietnam War and subsequent invasion of Cambodia in 1978. The invasion and migrations attracted the attention of the international community and the communist-wary United States, resulting in the establishment of logistical, infrastructural, and financial support, which was implemented in order to maintain the camps on the eastern border. With this international backing, the Thais were able to provide concentrated aid to the camps, which in effect served the resistance structure along the Cambodian border. Thus, the camps constituted an effective buffer to the encroaching Vietnamese, illustrating the way in which Cold War politics and regional rivalries influenced refugee policy and *identity* in the Thai–Cambodian context. In sum, policies surrounding sanctuary and refugee protection in Thailand were fluid and had as much to do with regional and international politics as they were an expression of national security.

This flexibility of policy and the ambiguity of boundaries had significant effects upon the Mon refugees, which are the subjects in Chapters Five and Six. Owing to changes in Thai refugee policy, the need to uphold agreements between Mon political groups and the Burmese government, and the uncertain relationship between boundary and refugee status, several relocation projects placed the Mon groups precariously close to areas controlled by the Burmese army. In addition, the intensification of army manoeuvres upon insurgents in the border areas left them more dependent on Thailand for military and humanitarian relief, precisely at a time when Thailand was becoming "less receptive to those needs" (p. 152). Whereas Chapter Four illustrates the way in which global politics shaped the nature of refugee policy, Chapters Five and Six effectively demonstrate how both domestic and external policies between Burma and Thailand significantly modified the way in which refugee communities and sanctuary were conceptualized.

Finally, the plight of many Burmese students and dissidents who sought political asylum in Bangkok after the 1988 uprisings is examined in Chapter Seven to demonstrate the vagueness of their status as well.

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Suggesting that the legal definition of these activists as either "refugees" or "illegal immigrants" is actually blurred in practice, Lang points to the inadequacies of international law and Thai immigration policy as contributing to the contentiousness and uncertainty of their identity.

Fear and Sanctuary presents an important account of the refugee problem along the Burmese–Thai border, and the complexities facing both migrant and host. The many strengths of the work lie in its interdisciplinary approach, its strong theoretical foundation, and its attempt to provide a view "from above" (in terms of state-level approaches to refugees) as much as it is firmly set on giving a view "from the ground". The latter perspective is augmented by a variety of "official" and "unpublished" materials that support the author's case, including documents from the Committee for the Promotion of People's Struggle in Monland, Amnesty International, the United Nations, the Karen National Union, Human Rights Watch/Asia, Shan Human Rights Foundation, the Karen Human Rights Group, and the Mon National Relief Committee, to name but a few. These together with a large number of anonymous refugee interviewees provide a strong but predictable commentary on the border situation. The work's main sources, in other words, could not have produced anything *but* the reading and interpretation that are presented. What would strengthen the scholarly tone of the book would be to contextualize the nature of the sources provided, for they are so transparent in their orientation that their objectivity becomes an issue. One paragraph (p. 68) does suggest that reports "may be ideologically freighted and tendentious", but there is no discussion on how to handle these types of sources, nor any attempt to contextualize them in an objective manner.

As a result, one is left wondering what the Burmese government's position is on these ethnic minorities, the role of domestic, regional, and international politics on its counter-insurgency methods, and how boundaries affect its perceptions of Thailand as a sanctuary. Using a "local Mon human rights commentator" to comment on "the interests of the military authorities in the center" (p. 69) or an anonymous interviewee (p. 70) to demonstrate that "recklessness itself is condoned (or even used as 'strategy') by the central authorities" is hardly sufficient to represent those views. In the end, government documents, newspapers, or official statements would be subject to the same criticism as that which is directed to some of the sources in *Fear and Sanctuary* — but what is necessary is to recognize the nature and problem of sources in the first place.

Another area of research might be a closer examination of insurgents and their role among the refugee camps. Lang's study discloses that factionalism among the Karens has complicated the situation and

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contributed to the "blurring" of refugee identity, while Thailand has supported resistance movements on both its borders. Such important insights deserve deeper study, as it is clear that the activities of these insurgents are an important component of the conditions causing the displacement of "citizens" (pp. 71, 88, 141, 142).

Finally, *Fear and Sanctuary* provokes a response to the interpretation of Burmese history that was provided. While Burma specialists have demonstrated the minor role of ethnicity as a category in Burmese history, it is apparent that it still influences the way in which the past is read. Specifically, pre-colonial power centres are described by Lang as "Mon, Burman, Shan and Arakanese" (p. 26), while cities of sixteenth century Lower Burma are given an exclusive "Mon" identity (p. 28), when the chronicles refer to them clearly by their place names. The processes of cultural, administrative, and economic integration are portrayed as violent, aggressive, and suppressive, reminding one of similar colonial interpretations of the encounter between Aryans and Dravidians in Ancient India. One must be cautious in rendering the past through a judgment of the present and be wary of assigning "ethnic" perspectives upon studies of historical processes, as Lang suggests of Lieberman's work (p. 26). Even if ethnicity is read into the past, one should make sure to include the most recent, relevant, and substantiated work in surveys of the historical narrative. Reference to Michael Aung-Thwin's work on the "Three Shan Brothers" (*Journal of Asian Studies*, 1996) and his subsequent book on the various "myths" in Burmese historiography (*Myth and History in the Historiography of Early Burma: Paradigms, Primary Sources, and Prejudices, 1998*), would arguably have yielded a more accurate perspective from which to engage in a discourse on the history of ethnicity in Burma.

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***Nuclear India in the Twenty-First Century*. Edited by D.R. Sardesai and Raju G.C. Thomas.** New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. 312pp.

This book is an attempt to reassess India's nuclear weapons programme from a strategic, political, technological, and economic perspective.

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This reassessment was necessary in view of several factors. First, unlike its "peaceful nuclear explosion" in 1974, the 1998 tests have enabled India to close the gap between its nuclear research programme and a weaponization programme with delivery systems, command and control structures, all woven around a doctrine of credible minimum deterrence. Secondly, there has been a paradigm change in the perceptions of policy-makers, strategic commentators, the research and scientific establishment, and the military about the regional and global balance of power, mainly as a result of increasing unilateralism by the United States, the concept of humanitarian interventions and shifts in threat dynamics following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks that exposed security vulnerabilities of almost every nation in the world. This volume offers arguments about how the focus of nuclear debate concerning India has now shifted from whether the 1998 tests were necessary or justified to one of how to achieve security and stability for India and preserve its independence and sovereignty within affordable means without triggering an arms race in South Asia.

One explanation of nuclear proliferation, in the case of countries such as India, is the search for an "oppositional nationalist" identity — combining a perceived threat from an external enemy and a sense of national pride. Jacques E.C. Hymans found the cases of India and France strikingly similar in this respect. However, Raju G.C. Thomas would like readers to know that the events that followed the 1998 tests soon revealed how such considerations cannot be sufficient to explain New Delhi's continued search for nuclear weapons capability development. There is now a need to respond to the strategic shifts emerging from a U.S.-led expanded NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) alliance, with "defence capabilities initiative" justifying intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign state on humanitarian grounds, including a response to the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction. K. Subrahmanyam describes how such a shift has also brought to the fore the huge asymmetry in weapons capabilities and information technology, as demonstrated by the United States during the Yugoslav campaign in the 1990s. The sense of insecurity and uncertainty is further buttressed by the disproportional economic power of the West *vis-à-vis* the developing world. This asymmetry has been especially threatening to lesser states, thereby justifying their need to acquire and possess nuclear weapons. These perceptions would lead the reader to some of the main arguments of the author: for India, nuclear weapons would remain the strategic backbone of its deterrent posture, regionally against China and Pakistan, and globally against other nuclear weapon states. The perpetuation of what New Delhi perceives to be "nuclear apartheid" by the international nuclear non-

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proliferation regime and the lack of a countervailing global conventional military power, would also ensure that nuclear deterrence will retain its attractiveness for India as a long-term strategy against military interventions of any kind. Moreover, India's nuclear doctrine is based on this rationale that aims to retain the capacity of a credible minimum deterrent at affordable costs.

George Perkovich's piece draws from his earlier book, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999). Here, Perkovich maintains that the predominance of the scientific establishment in India's nuclear policy-making to the exclusion of its military, can be the reason why India was outpaced in the militarization of its nuclear capacity. The 1998 tests were meant to lead India on a shortcut to catch up with China in the race for an Asian major power status, as the economic route was beginning to appear too long and too distant to great powerdom. The indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the emerging Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) trap provided the immediate provocations. India was all along uncomfortable with what it perceived to be the continued failure of the nuclear weapon states to put value to India's restraint from 1974 to the 1990s. There was also a failure to appreciate that normative commitments for restraint could not foreclose the possibility for New Delhi to take the nuclear route should its expectations to see a world free of nuclear weapons be decisively rejected. India played down the reciprocal nuclear tests by Islamabad on the basis of its argument that nuclear deterrence could now be a stabilizing factor, both for the Indo–Pakistan and Sino–Indian security relationships. To some extent, this was borne out by New Delhi's demonstrated strategic confidence during the Lahore summit with Islamabad. Simultaneously, however, the reader is led to the lessons from the Kargil engagements of 1999 between India and Pakistan. Kargil shattered the myth of "nuclear weapons deterrent" as a factor for stability, and exposed the inherent dangers of unstable regimes having nuclear weapons, with the possibility of recurrent, albeit low intensity conflicts fought under the nuclear threshold. By the end of 1999, under the looming shadow of an expanded NATO, and apprehensive about increasing global unilateralism by the United States, New Delhi appeared to have been sucked into the logic of adversarial nuclear weapons development and deployment — and what could be an arms race trap with Islamabad.

By conducting the nuclear weapons tests in 1998, India not only challenged the non-proliferation regime, but also exposed its weakness in terms of its inability to constrain nuclear proliferation. K. Subrahmanyam holds the view that the systemic inequity inherent

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in the non-proliferation regime has made it difficult to prevent the passing of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) know-how into the hands of terrorists and rogue elements, thus increasing the possibility of the use of WMD by these desperate entities. Significantly, as argued by T.V. Paul, the regime was a static one, with no room to account for possible power transitions and the rise of new great powers. With a huge population, advancing technological prowess, and economic potential, India found the doors to great power status closed and therefore sought the nuclear route, which it thought could give it protection against large-scale overt military intervention, help maintain the territorial *status quo*, and provide a hedge against major technological breakthroughs in conventional capabilities. Despite the international outcry, the Indian nuclear capability has now become a *fait accompli*, which New Delhi is unlikely to give up without a substantial global move towards disarmament, and steps taken to safeguard its perceived security interests.

Bharat Karnad also treats the reader to the same line of argument. He finds in India's nuclear doctrine a case for a flexible deterrent capability, "to be able to face any contingency in a strategic environment which is fluid". The nature and type of nuclear weapons systems are based on India's security needs that provide strategic independence and constitute a diplomatic shield behind which it can pursue its national interests more effectively. As the arguments remain mired around "quality versus quantity", Bharat Karnad finds it prudent for India to keep its range of options open for its nuclear policy and force structure, and to obtain for itself at least a notional parity with three second-tier nuclear weapon states — the United Kingdom, France, and China. This imperative makes a case for India to have a full and versatile nuclear and thermonuclear deterrent with lethal and credible delivery systems. India's international bargaining position can be strengthened by not being seen as too eager for a settlement of proliferation issues other than on its own terms. The hitherto propensity for moderation and morality, which compromises New Delhi's right to thermonuclear security, can be counterproductive in the long run, argues Karnad.

Others like Siddharth Varadarajan do not find this line of argument very persuasive. What, for instance, is the international legitimacy of a nuclear capability, particularly in view of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution urging both India and Pakistan to integrate into the non-proliferation regime? What is its worth in view of the development of missile defence systems by the United States? Nuclear weapons, argues Varadarajan, neither provide credible deterrence nor

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confer great power status. Given the increasing international aversion to interventionist nuclear armed states, India can hope to have its presence marked and win respect by making a clean break with this big power mindset and by working to reorder the world system to one of increasing democratic equity. Similarly, according to Rajendra Raja, going nuclear did not make India safer, rather it added to the instability in the region and heightened the risk of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of extremist groups, especially after the events of 11 September 2001. Moreover, the impact of economic sanctions were severe, as were Washington's moves to restrict Indian scientists from research and other facilities in the United States, at places such as the Fermilab. Ben Sheppard would like the reader to know how the introduction of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles on a significant scale has undermined the conventional balance-of-power between New Delhi and Islamabad and added to the negative variables that collectively raise the risks of an inadvertent nuclear war for the region.

The book has also made some attempts to enable one to put a price-tag on the nuclear weapons programme and assess the burden of nuclear defence. This, of course, is not an easy task, given, as Deepak Lal tells us, the veil of secrecy maintained around such development programmes. Besides, estimation needs also to take into account the costs of weapons delivery systems, trade-offs between nuclear defence and conventional defence, the opportunity costs of a nuclear defence programme on the civilian development programme, and tangible and perceived value outcomes. Arguably, maintains Devesh Kapur, the negative consequences of the sanctions imposed by the U.S.-led international community were minimal for India. However, the cognitive impact of the sanctions was more significant in the short run, especially on the Indian scientific community. The possibility of New Delhi achieving sophistication in nuclear weapons technology also remains remote, given India's internal economic, institutional, and technological constraints. Moreover, according to Raju G.C. Thomas, the international technological and economic sanctions that followed the 1998 tests severely undermined the development of India's nuclear energy programme. By maintaining an overt nuclear weapons capability, India will continue to be denied access to advanced technology from the West in the field of nuclear power plants.

Most significantly, Peter R. Lavoy believes that the race for a credible nuclear deterrence in South Asia might drive both India and Pakistan to political and social bankruptcy. As the threshold for conventional war decreases, the consequent breakdown of domestic order could ward off incentives for critically needed foreign investment

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to spur economic growth and development. This makes a very strong case for both India and Pakistan to pursue non-nuclear sources of security.

George H. Quester sums up succinctly the arguments in the book. With the 1998 tests, South Asia seems to have shifted from a pattern of "mutual deterrence of nuclear weapons acquisition" to "mutual deterrence of use". The theory that nuclear proliferation reduces the incidence of conventional wars has been put to repeated tests by events after 1998, as was the legitimacy of the claim regarding great power status. Any further erosion of the non-proliferation regime triggered by policies of other threshold nuclear proliferants (such as North Korea) can only be arrested by great power diplomacy and strategy aimed at convincing these states that there has been more loss than gain for India and Pakistan, so that the paths followed by New Delhi and Islamabad are not worth emulating.

In all, the edited volume has put together a wide spectrum of issues encompassing the nuclear proliferation debate concerning India. It makes a major contribution to the understanding of contemporary nuclear dynamics in the still-operative state-centric structure of international politics.

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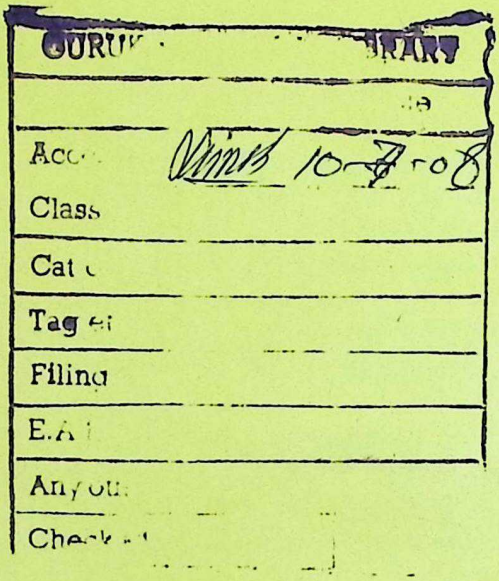

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